Stourbridge
CHRONICLE

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NOW TELL ME HOW DOES THAT FAMOUS FA CUP SONG GO AGAIN?

Andy Bullingham, of Stourbridge Football Club, gets in some practice

STOURBRIDGE Football Club's vice-chairman will sing Abide With Me on the Wembley turf ahead of the FA Cup final – but he has yet to learn all the words.

Andy Bullingham, from Amblecote-based Glassboys, received a call from the Football Association to perform the hymn before Saturday's game, a London derby between Arsenal and Chelsea.

He will sing with seven other representatives from football clubs which have featured in this year's competition. The group will be backed by a band, and the stadium's 90,000 crowd.

Mr Bullingham will be wearing a Stourbridge FC replica shirt for the performance. He said: "I didn't know all the words, so my daughter has downloaded the lyrics so I can get learning."

He added: "It is an immense privilege to be chosen. I've been to Wembley before, but to be out on the pitch, singing the hymn, will be quite something.

"I suppose its a shame the team aren't with me."

The Glassboys reached the third round of the cup, defeating league side Northampton Town with Jack Duggan's goal sealing the win. The club then went down to a 2-1 defeat at Wycombe Wanderers in front of more than 2,000 travelling supporters.

The Glassboys' features grabbed national headlines, and manager Gary Hackett's men were one of four clubs nominated for the by the Football Association for their FA Cup Giant-Killers Award this season.

The FA's Andy Ambler said: "It has been a historic season for the Emirates FA Cup and we were keen to pay tribute to a number of clubs at all levels of the football pyramid who provided the watching world with memorable moments. The singing of Abide with Me is one of the iconic moments on cup final day and therefore it seemed highly appropriate to bring the clubs into the heart of this tradition."

Three sports clubs have now been targeted by raiders

£13K BURGLARY AT CRICKET CLUB

BURGLARS using high-powered machinery broke in to a cricket club's storage unit, taking £13,000 of ground maintenance equipment – one of three incidents of criminals targeting sports clubs in the area.

Oldswinford and Stourbridge Social Cricket Club was the victim of a 'professional and clearly planned job', say club bosses. The raiders cut off locks to the storage units at one of the club's bases, in Norwood Road in Brierley Hill.

Once inside the shed, close to nearby homes backing on to the cricket field, the criminals took three grass mowers, three trimmers and a hover mower. The total cost of the haul is estimated to be £13,000.

The theft, discovered on Friday afternoon, is the latest targeting of a cricket club.

Three weeks ago, a storage unit at Swindon Cricket Club's ground in Hinksford Lane, was broken into but nothing was taken. And another club, which asked not to be named, was also recently targeted, with equipment being stolen.

Broken

Paul Hatton, vice-chairman at Oldswinford and Stourbridge club, which also has a ground in Stourbridge, said: "We have had graffiti in the past, things going missing. But this was something else, it was a professional and clearly planned job."

He said the theft was discovered by the groundsman when he went to use the equipment on Friday, and discovered the locks had been broken.

The club, which has four adult teams and six youth teams, is now to use equipment from its other ground, while depending on Dudley Council to cut its grass.

He said: "They got in using highly-powered machinery, and then managed to move out the equipment and take it away.

Report by Alex Ross

"It is strange no-one heard it, it was just 30ft from houses, we don't know when exactly it happened."

The club, he said, will now have to consider bringing in CCTV, adding more expense. He added: "We are feeling a bit depleted. Why someone thinks they can just come in and take our equipment we depend on is beyond us."

David Darlaston, chairman of Swindon Cricket Club, said "We were victim of an attempted burglary about three weeks ago. They opened up the unit, but don't think they took anything."

He added: "Sports clubs survive on the generosity of members, so to lose pieces of equipment, it causes upset, not just for that club, but others."

A West Midlands Police spokesman said the Oldwinsford and Stourbridge raid is believed to have happened sometime between 10pm on 10 May and 2.30pm on 12 May.

"Anyone with information can call 101 quoting crime reference number 20DY/99157M/17."

Take a Peaky as hit show returns

Stars Cillian Murphy and Charlotte Riley with crew on set for Peaky Blinders, filming in Dudley

LIGHTS, camera, hats on! Peaky Blinders returned to its spiritual home in the Black Country for filming of its new series.

The show's main man Cillian Murphy – who plays Brummie gangster Tommy Shelby – was snapped on set with cigarette in mouth at the Black Country Living Museum on Monday.

It caps a remarkable week for the popular Dudley venue, which last week hosted Steve Coogan and John C Reilly for the filming of a new movie about Laurel and Hardy.

Murphy, aged 40, rose to prominence with his roles in horror movie 28 Days Later and then blockbuster Batman Begins. However, it is in the role of Shelby – the leader of the ruthless Peaky Blinders gang famed for the razor blades hidden in their cap peaks – that he has become one of the most famous faces on TV.

MANCHESTER

Flag at half mast after bomb horror

THE flag at Dudley council house has been flown at half mast as a mark of respect following the terrorist attack in Manchester.

The blast at the end of an Ariana Grande concert killed 22 people and injured 59 others at the Manchester Arena on Monday.

Councillor Dave Tyler, Mayor of Dudley, said: "We are deeply saddened to hear the tragic news, our thoughts and deepest sympathy are with the victims and the families and friends of those affected."

West Midlands Mayor Andy Street said he was 'deeply shocked' and added everyone must be 'particularly vigilant'. Police and Crime Commissioner David Jamieson described it as a 'vicious and truly dreadful attack on young people'.

ACCIDENT

Woman hit by car is left badly hurt

A 38-year-old woman has been left badly injured after being hit by a car in Gornal.

The woman suffered injuries to her face, right wrist, abdomen and left leg when she was hit by a black car on Zoar Street at around 12.20pm on Monday.

She was initially treated at Russells Hall Hospital and was then sent to the major trauma centre at Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Birmingham for further treatment.

ROADS

Top 10 of worst potholes in region

THE worst potholes across Staffordshire and the Black Country have been highlighted to highways authorities thanks to Chronicle readers.

We invited readers to send pictures and details of some of the troublespots being endured by motorists on our road network.

The most damaged roads and deepest craters have been identified and passed on to local councils to prioritise. Two of the top three have been identified now for major works in the summer and repairs have been carried out on at least two others.

● Full story and top 10 – Page 4

INSIDE

FRESH VISA JOY FOR COUPLE

PAGE 3

SEE OUR BANK HOLIDAY OFFERS ON PAGE 8

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Proud new mayor picks his charities

Mayor Councillor Dave Tyler

THE new Mayor of Dudley has pledged to support three charities as he officially took charge of the famous civic chains.

Councillor Dave Tyler has been sworn in as the first citizen of the borough.

The former deputy mayor named Dudley Mind, the YMCA and Dudley Alzheimer's Society as his chosen charities for the year – and vowed to do all he could to raise money for people in most need.

Councillor Tyler said: "It is a huge honour and a privilege to be mayor of this borough and something I am proud to take on.

"It is an opportunity to not only highlight the fantastic work that these charities do to support people who need help, but also help raise vital funds to help them carry on for many years."

Twitter

Councillor Tyler also named his wife Barbara as Mayoress. The deputy mayor was named as Councillor Alan Taylor with Winifred Taylor as deputy Mayoress.

People can follow the Mayor on his civic engagements on Twitter via @DudleyMayor

Meanwhile, Dudley's first Muslim mayor Councillor Mohammed Hanif, who served as Mayor of Dudley for the last 12 months, said he was honoured to serve the borough.

He helped to raise more than £37,000 for charities during his mayoral year.

Addressing the council, he said: "This year has been an amazing journey. I have truly been honoured to serve the Dudley borough as mayor.

"I have seen some amazing work being done in the borough. Both me and my wife Zebeda have thoroughly enjoyed every minute of it."

Oarsome! Dragon boats race to success on lake

AN annual dragon boat race celebrated its 17th anniversary with more than 300 people taking part in the extravaganza on the Great Pool in the grounds of Himley Hall, near Dudley.

The race saw 21 teams hop into colourful dragon boats, all in the name of charity.

Thousands arrived at Himley Park on Sunday to see participants from across the Black Country take part in the challenge.

It raised thousands for a variety of charities both in the Midlands, across the country and internationally.

The event, organised by Wolverhampton Rotary Club, has raised almost £320,000 over the years.

It involves a 350-yard race with teams competing in various heats throughout the day.

Money raised from each team is equally divided, with half going to the team's chosen charity and the other half going to the Rotary Club, who donate the money to their needy causes that are both local and worldwide.

Mike Boyce, chairman of the dragon boat committee and member of Wolverhampton Rotary club, said: "It's been a fantastic event and it's wonderful how many people have turned up.

"The crowd is fantastic every year. We put all this on for the sheer enjoyment of it. Families loved it as there's lots going on. I think people enjoy it so much because it's a lovely environment and people have a chance to battle it out on the water and it's a little more unusual.

Grateful

"We're very grateful to everyone comes along and who takes part because without them we wouldn't have the event."

Sedgley Scorpions won the race, followed by Munich All Stars UTC in second and Bank's Bombers in third.

Wayne Owens, captain of the GKR Karate team, based in Dudley, was taking part with his team for the eighth time. He said: "We first got involved because we wanted to raise money for Edwards Trust. They offer bereavement support and I used them when I lost my child. We raise about £1,500 for them each time we take part."

Other teams raised money for charities including Compton Hospice, The Good Shepherd centre, Alzheimer's Association and the Beacon Centre.

Nathan Clayton, captain of the Green Park School team, said: "We're a special needs school so all the money we raise goes to them. It's amazing because the families of our pupils come along to enjoy themselves too."

The team from the Horse and Jockey pub in Wall Heath get paddling in the dragon boat race

This little superhero gets some tips on competitors

Drumming up support on the water

Motorist is jailed after collision kills man aged 90

A DRIVER who fled the scene of a crash that killed a 90-year-old man has been jailed for 18 weeks.

Matthew Raybould, 27, of Buffrey Road, Dudley, was driving from work to his grandparents' house on November 25 when he hit Frederick Dudley on Stourbridge Road, Wolverhampton.

Mr Dudley, of Bearnett Road, Wolverhampton, had been crossing the road with a shopping trolley after getting off a bus but had not been on a crossing, Cannock Magistrates Court heard.

Raybould saw his windscreen crack and felt a bump but carried on driving. He pleaded guilty to failing to stop after a collision on the A449.

Prosecutor Mr Kul Khaira said: "The defendant was in the process of over-taking a vehicle on the dual carriageway when he collided with the victim, who suffered serious injuries and was pronounced dead later that day.

"The defendant left the scene but was seen by a colleague who had been driving behind him and later told police about what had happened."

Defending Raybould, Mr Jason Georgiou said: "His only problem was driving off. He did this because he was scared and panicked."

Chief magistrate Andrew Nelson sentenced Raybould to 18 weeks in prison, banned him from driving for 12 months and ordered him to pay £200 in court costs.

He said: "You made no effort to own up to what you had done wrong and gave a no comment police interview."

Rebecca's father hosts music tent

THE father of a young woman who died after being hit by a speeding sports car is hosting an acoustic music tent in memory of his daughter at an annual event.

Gerard McManus will organise the music venue for the Warley in the Woods event on July 2 to play host to various acoustic musicians.

His daughter Rebecca, from Oldbury, a former Stourbridge A-levels student, was 21 when she was struck by a car racing at 100mph, as she waited at a bus stop on the Hagley Road in Bearwood. She was a promising poet who had just completed an English Literature and Creative Writing degree at the University of East Anglia.

Mr McManus said: "Rebecca was passionate about music and she really enjoyed live performances."

Woman is taken to hospital after crash

A CRASH involving two cars and a lorry saw a woman tged in her 20s taken to Russells Hall Hospital suffering from back pain. The accident happened on the Birmingham New Road in Dudley, near to the Tesco Extra petrol station, just after 9am on Friday.

'Uncertainty' over market sees traders make protest

A NEW management team is being brought in to run Dudley Market – sparking anger among traders who say they have been kept in the dark about what it will mean for them.

Dudley Council announced Tudor Markets has been chosen after submitting a 'strong and ambitious bid'.

But traders insisted they were not given a say over the agreement and raised concerns, saying they fear a rents hike.

Around a dozen stallholders gathered outside Dudley Council House on Thursday night to protest against the decision. Many had already been angered by potential changes to working terms and conditions.

Council bosses said it has challenged companies to show they could 'drive forward' the market and bring more footfall. Tudor will take over at the start of July.

But market manager Len Lenihan said: "Any business needs to have a level of certaint. There will be nothing but uncertainty until July 1."

Dudley Council strategic director Alan Lunt said: "Dudley Market is at the heart of Dudley town centre, which is why it was essential that we picked the strongest team to build on the work and investment delivered by Dudley Council. We are excited to be working with Tudor Markets whose application really stood out against some very good local competition."

James Willis, director of Tudor Markets, said: "We will look to meet with the traders as soon as possible."

Grant joy at glass museum

A NEW museum in the Black Country has taken a huge step towards completion after being awarded a £50,000 grant.

Trustees behind the White House Cone Museum of Glass in Wordsley have spoken of their joy after receiving the crucial funding which will help keep the ambitious project on track.

The museum is being created at the former Stuart Crystal factory, near the famous Red House Glass Cone.

It has been made possible thanks to a £2.1 million cash injection from the European Development Fund and a £900,000 grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund. Now a further £50,000 has been donated from the Garfield Weston Foundation, ensuring the project gets across the finishing line.

£122k boost for community centre

AN EXTRA £122,000 has been put towards a community centre being built in Dudley. The North Priory Community Centre, on Priory Road, is almost complete and now extra money is coming from Dudley Council.

Family tribute to father killed in accident

James O'Brien

TRIBUTE has been paid to a father-of-four who died when his car overturned in a crash in Kingswinford.

James O'Brien, known as Jimmy, has been remembered as a 'loving husband and father' by his family as an investigation continues into the fatal accident.

His car rolled onto its roof in the incident which happened at the junction of Ham Lane and Stallings Lane on Monday evening, May 15.

A woman, thought to be aged in her 20s, stopped in a bid to help Mr O'Brien after the crash at around 6.25pm. The 28-year-old was treated by members of the emergency services, including the air ambulance, but was pronounced dead at the scene.

Two fire crews from Brierley Hill also attended.

In a statement his family said: "Jimmy was very much loved by all that knew him.

Caring

"He was a loving husband and father, a caring son and an amazing brother and uncle. He will be so deeply missed by all that knew him."

Detective Sergeant Paul Hughes, from West Midlands Police's Regional Collision Investigation Unit said: "This is a tragic set of circumstances for all involved.

"James' family continue to be supported by our dedicated family liaison team."

Det Sgt Hughes added: "I would like to appeal to anyone who may have witnessed the collision and has not yet been in touch with police to contact either myself or my team to help us piece together the circumstances."

Anyone with information on the accident is asked to speak with the Regional Collision Investigation Team, call them on 101.

Fresh visa joy for pastor and his Brazilian wife

A MARRIED couple forced to live thousands of miles apart due to an immigration battle have won a fresh fight in their bid to stay together for good.

Church pastor Robert and Adna Cooper, who live in Brierley Hill, were torn apart when Brazilian Adna was refused entry to the UK four years ago.

The couple had met in Sao Paulo in 1999 and married the following year in Kingswinford but, after returning to Brazil in 2003, Adna was refused a permanent visa.

Then, three years ago, they won a landmark appeal and Adna was granted a temporary visa and the pair were reunited.

Now the couple have found out that the application for the visa to be extended has been approved.

Adna, aged 38, who works as a full-time receptionist in Birmingham, has had her visa extended by two-and-a-half years. It is another step towards a permanent visa, which can be applied for in 2019.

The process cost the couple £5,000 and proved so stressful, Robert stepped down from his role as a pastor at the First Renewal Presbyterian Church.

The 42-year-old, who is working again as a pastor, at the Waterfront Christian Fellowship in Brierley Hill, said: "We're so relieved and happy we can move on with our lives for another few years. Having been through so much, it was a worry, but the visa has come through and she can stay with me."

Process

Adna said: "It feels like your whole life could fall apart, but thankfully I've got a visa again. It is another step, hopefully, in the process of staying here permanently."

The couple met when Robert, a former pupil at Pensnett School, was doing church work in the suburbs of Sao Paulo.

They returned to the UK the following year and Adna was given a resident visa before they married at Kingswinford Christian Centre.

After returning to Brazil in 2003, the pair encountered problems on wanting to return to the UK ten years later.

Under immigration rules, only British people who earn more than £18,600 can sponsor their non-European spouse's visa. Robert earned enough but he was unable to get pay slips to prove it, due to his employer being a non-profit group and, as a result, the pair were forced to live apart.

They received support from Chris Kelly, when he was Conservative MP for Dudley South, and eventually won their battle for a temporary visa.

Visa success means church pastor Robert and Adna Cooper, who live in Brierley Hill, have won another battle

Regeneration is main aim of new leader

POWER has been seized by the Tories on the council with its new leader pledging a wholescale review of regeneration to 'make Dudley boom'.

The Conservatives took control after support from UKIP saw Labour toppled.

Patrick Harley has now replaced Pete Lowe as leader of the authority and he has already outlined his early plans.

Councillor Harley, who has served Kingswford South since 2004, said: "The whole council now needs to come together and work together to push through initiatives to move Dudley forward.

"Regeneration, jobs and employment will be at the forefront of our vision.

"We need to not cutback on front line services but instead focus on change and transforming them.

"Ultimately there needs to be more consultation and dialogue between the three parties.

"It was very brave of UKIP to do what they did - but it was the right thing to do for the better.

"We need to now work together to push through bold initiatives to move Dudley forward."

NEWS IN BRIEF

Travellers move onto town site

TRAVELLERS have set up camp on a field near Dudley town centre.

The group moved onto a field on Lister Road in a total of 17 caravans.

Ward councillor Shaukat Ali said he'd received various complaints about the travellers and the council was working to remove them.

He said: "I've had a number of complaints from residents. We're going to move them from the site as soon as possible."

It comes after travellers set up camp at Rowley Regis train station car park on Friday.

'Wonderful son' hit by M5 coach

A MAN described as a 'wonderful son' has been named as the victim who was killed when he was hit by a coach on the M5.

Nicholas Mowl, aged 41, was involved in the accident on the M5 southbound between Junction 1 and the link road with Junction 8 of the M6 last Tuesday.

Mr Mowl was confirmed dead at the scene.

A tribute from his family described Mr Mowl, from Solihull, as a 'wonderful son, brother and uncle who was loved so much'.

Window works at historic hotel

WORK is ongoing to replace windows at an historic hotel in Dudley.

Scaffolding is up outside The Station Hotel in Castle Hill for work lasting several weeks.

Duty manager Ben Price said: "We are doing the windows, getting them all replaced. We are getting the windows on the front done. Then we will be doing the courtyard-facing area.

"The idea is to restore the look of the windows to what they were."

Purr-fect result as Cat wins pub award

THE Cat Inn at Enville, near Stourbridge, is to receive the South Staffordshire pub of the year award from the Campaign for Real Ale.

The chairman of the Dudley and South Staffordshire branch of Camra, Ryan Hunt, will make the presentation to licensees Dan and Aimee Hicks on June 14 at 7.30pm. The couple have been at the pub, which dates back nearly 300 years, for five years.

The branch club of the year award goes to Kinver Constitutional Club.

Billy statue restored

MOLINEUX'S iconic Billy Wright statue has been restored to its former glory five months after being damaged when hit by a car.

Extensive damage was caused when a car careered into the statue outside the stadium in January with large chunks taken out of the base.

COUNTY NEWS

Woman in 101 call to report cat

A WOMAN rang police to complain that a cat was meowing outside her front door. Now West Midlands Police has launched a campaign to encourage people to be responsible when they call the force.

On social media they are using the hashtag #ThinkBeforeYouCall to spread the message.

This week the force has shared examples of such calls. And police are reminding members of the public that these increase queuing time for those who have a more serious matter to report.

Firms could save £27m on water

FIGURES released by Utilitywise have revealed that firms in the Midlands could collectively save as much as £27 million on their water bills.

This follows deregulation of the water market in England, giving business owners the chance to renegotiate their existing water contracts or look to a new supplier.

Around 164,000 businesses in the Midlands now have control over who supplies their water, giving the local water market a value of approximately £276m. The water market in England is now valued at £2bn.

Thousands prepare to mark Ramadan

THOUSANDS of Muslims across the region are preparing for the religious festival, Ramadan with a month of prayer and fasting.

This year Ramadan starts on May 27 and will finish on June 24, both Saturdays.Following this, on June 25, Muslims will celebrate Eid al-Fitr which is often known as just Eid.

This celebration, which is to be held on June 25, marks the end of the Ramadan fasting and the start of the next month, Shawwal.

Sex abuse charities get £75,000 boost

A CHARITY that helps victims of sexual exploitation in the Black Country has received a £75,000 cash boost.

Walsall-based Street Teams has been donated the five-figure sum from Lloyds Bank Foundation, one of the country's leading grant makers.

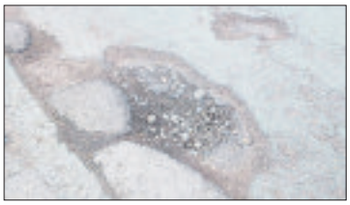
It will help the charity's Transition Project, which helps support young adults at risk of exploitation, grooming and trafficking by providing one-to-one help in a range of practical issues including housing and benefits.

Teddy bear tales

CLENT History Society holds its open meeting on May 25 when Dr Gillian White will be giving a talk on teddy bears, at 8pm in Clent Parish Hall, Church Avenue, Clent.

Dr White has been curator of the Warwickshire Museum and of the National Trust property, Hardwick Hall.

Readers drive home point over crumbling routes



The road surface in Buchanan Avenue, Walsall

A picture showing the problems in Stourbridge

Problems highlighted in Station Road, Wombourne

Worst potholes on our roads revealed

TOP OF THE POTS

WE knew the state of the roads in the Black Country and Staffordshire was bad – we just didn't realise how bad!

When The Chronicle launched its campaign to highlight the most pothole-ridden roads in our region in order that they should get priority for repairs, we were already aware of a few trouble spots.

But we have been inundated with emails, reports and pictures of some shocking holes endured by drivers on a daily basis.

Based on the number of reports and looking at the pictures readers have sent us, we have compiled a top 10 of what we believe are the worst roads for potholes in our area. The most complaints we received were regarding roads in Staffordshire taking six of the top ten spots.

Hill Top at Hednesford was reported to us by a number of people and pictures showed a succession of potholes all around these busy islands and the roads which approach it. Reader Paul Gill sent us one picture where fresh road markings had been painted over the potholes with a large dip in one line as it sank into a hole.

Reporting

Carlisle Road on the Longford Estate in Cannock, was flagged up by locals and a number of pictures submitted. Resident Sandra McLeod said: "The whole length of the road is riddled with bad potholes."

Five Ways Island in nearby Heath Hayes was flagged up as having 38 separate outstanding complaints about the state of the road surface. There were several complaints about the A449 along its length through Kingswinford. One reader, Jo Well, complained: "There is a strong possibility of an accident on this busy, fast road as drivers swerve to avoid them."

Many readers complained about the state of the A460 from the motorway island for junction 11 of the M6 heading into Cannock. Wombourne was flagged up by a number of readers as having crumbling roads, particularly around Station Road, while Pattingham was also highlighted.

In addition we received shocking pictures of small craters on roads in Stourbridge, Walsall and Wolverhampton. Roads in Great Wyrley and Rugeley also featured regularly.

Did your road make it in our worst potholes list?

The Chronicle's Top 10:

- Hill Top, Hednesford – works beginning in August
- Carlisle Road, Longford Estate, Cannock – no date set
- Five Ways Island, Heath Hayes – works beginning in July
- A449 through Kingswinford – 'added to future programme of work'
- A460/M6 junction 11 island and surrounding area – repairs now carried out
- Station Road and surrounding area, Wombourne – no date set
- High Street, Pattingham – no date set
- Romsley Road, Stourbridge – 'action as soon as possible'
- Buchanan Avenue, Walsall – repaired
- Wergs Hall Road, Wolverhampton – no response

The Chronicle has taken the results to the relevant councils and there is good news for local people. A programme of work to resurface the roads and replace damaged kerbstones as part of a £240,000 investment is to take place at Hill Top, with work due to get under way this August. Similarly, significant work is planned for the Five Ways Island with a five-week project due to start in July.

And work has already taken place to repair some of the potholes and damage on the A460/M6 junction 11 island since the Chronicle readers initially flagged up the problems.

Staffordshire's highways chief Mark Deaville said: "We have to prioritise pothole repairs where they pose the biggest risk to members of the public and are currently finalising our programme of repairs for the next 12 months to ensure it delivers the maximum benefits with the budget available."

Hill Top, Hednesford, riddled with potholes

A copy of the E&S in a Wergs Hall Road pothole

Five Ways island in Heath Hayes, Cannock

Alan Lunt, strategic director for place directorate at Dudley Council, said: "We have a robust system in place with inspection teams who identify road defects such as potholes, with the most severe cases highlighted for urgent attention. Clearly, we have to prioritise the most serious problems above others but we are working to deal with as many as we can."

Walsall Council said: "We were aware of the repairs required at Buchanan Avenue and have undertaken pothole repairs with a Velocity Patcher. We can confirm that there is no longer any significant damage outstanding in the area."

Wolverhampton Council has not yet responded.

No evidence for schoolgirl claim about abduction

REPORTS of a 12-year-old girl being abducted on her way home from school were made up, police have revealed.

The girl told officers she was dragged into a taxi by four men as she left her school in Stourbridge last Thursday. She said she was then driven to Clent, five miles away, where she was able to get out of the car.

But police officers, who launched an 'extensive investigation', have revealed the account was untrue. West Midlands Police spent 'countless hours' checking CCTV in the bid to identify a vehicle and any offenders.

A statement said: "After monitoring her route they found no evidence of the alleged attack."

The report resulted in schools across the Dudley borough issuing alerts in letters parents and pupils.

Detective Sergeant Matt Slattery said: "Incidents of child abduction are thankfully rare, but any reports of such are rigorously investigated and any bogus accounts will be quickly uncovered.

"Detectives responded in the way people would expect when faced with a report of a child being abducted. As the inquiry progressed, it quickly became clear the incident had not happened in the way it was described to us. I know that this allegation caused fear among local residents and, although the investigation continues, and the girl is being supported, I want to stress that the public were never in any danger."

Five flee after Peugeot hits car

FIVE people are believed to have fled from a car after it smashed into a parked vehicle in Dudley.

It happened on St James' Road, which leads into the town centre, shortly before 8pm on Thursday.

Police and two fire crews were called to the scene where they found a wrecked black Peugeot car and a silver Ford Focus which had been parked up in the road.

Witnesses saw a group of five, men and women, abandon the Peugeot and run off.

Officers closed off the street while firefighters made the vehicles safe and cleared the debris.

Police are investigating the collision and witnesses or anyone else with information is asked to call them on 101.

Flats revamp proposed at empty former pub

A PUB in Stourbridge, empty for two years, could be part demolished and converted into flats. SEP Properties Ltd has applied to demolish extensions at The Bulls Head pub on Pedmore Road and convert the first floor into two self-contained flats

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Big day as a restored 'little ship' sails again

A DUNKIRK 'little ship' which fell on hard times has completed her first voyage since restoration.

The Anne, which took part in the famous evacuation of Allied soldiers from France in 1940, sailed down the Thames from Shepperton to a new berth at Windsor with family and friends aboard.

"It went terribly well," said Mrs Annie Gabb, who lives near Bridgnorth, and was named after the 30ft pleasure cruiser which had belonged to her grandfather, PJ Darby, who lived at Hagley, near Stourbridge.

"We had a few little snags to be sorted out and got away from Shepperton at about 2.30pm, filled up with diesel, and got to Windsor at 8 o'clock. It was really lovely, although the weather wasn't very nice, and we got through six locks without any dramas.

"We have all sorts of exciting things lined up. There's Henley regatta, where the little ships will be, and we plan to take her to Dunkirk for the 80th anniversary of the evacuation."

Her grandfather's boat was moored at Tenby before the war, when the family had a house on the Welsh coast. At the time of the Dunkirk evacuation the Anne was requisitioned and sailed to Ramsgate, before crossing the Channel to help rescue stranded soldiers. The boats were under attack and the Anne returned with bullet holes.

Two years ago Mrs Gabb tracked down the Anne and had it restored. "It's been absolutely worth every penny," she added.

1908 Cup medal sells for £8,000

A 1908 FA Cup final winner's medal presented to the then Wolves captain has sold at auction for £8,000.

The 15 carat gold medal, handed to Billy Wooldridge after Wolves' 3-1 win over Newcastle, went under the hammer in London. It had been estimated to fetch between £6,000 and £8,000.

The medal is in a good condition and an engraving on the back features the skipper's name. It had belonged to Shirley Burn, from Lichfield, who said she bought it from Wooldridge's grandson in 1979.

After Mrs Burn's husband died in 1994 she loaned it to Wolves and it was held at the club museum for 21 years. Wooldridge, born in Netherton in 1878. made 356 appearances for Wolves, scoring 90 goals in 12 years.

Grab a bargain at library's sale

A SALE of withdrawn book stock is being held at Gornal Library as part of a coffee morning. It is at the library in Abbey Road, Lower Gornal, on Tuesday from 10am to 12.30pm. Call (01384) 812755 for more information.

Museum in race against time to save showroom

Former gas showroom faces demolition

THE battle to save an historic building is continuing despite a date being earmarked for demolition.

The Black Country Living Museum is keen to save a 1940s gas showroom in West Bromwich but Sandwell Council says it may be demolished this autumn to make way for homes. The showroom has been vacant for more than 20 years.

A report to Sandwell Council says: "In recent years masonry has been falling off the property and measures have had to be taken.

"The proposed demolition is complex due to asbestos being disturbed within the property and services to the adjacent former magistrates court run through the property.

"A planning brief has been prepared for the site and it is proposed to market the site for a residential-led mixed use development."

Museum bosses want to take the showroom down brick-by-brick and rebuild it at their Dudley attraction as part of a £21 million project to create a 1940s to '60s town.

The premises located on the corner of Lombard Street West and High Street, were part of the West Bromwich Corporation Gas Department and became the headquarters for local supporters of the miners' strike in 1984.

The building's original frontage was destroyed after it was bomb damaged in a Second World War air raid.

It's connection to significant historical moments in the region, and surviving period details inside the building, have sparked the museum's interest in the premises.

The museum and council are looking to reach an agreement.

Fewer children are in care across borough

THE NUMBER of children looked after in care has fallen by nearly nine per cent in Dudley over the last two years, new figures for the local authority show.

It comes as it was revealed case loads for social workers in the borough have eased – and the number leaving or moving jobs has reduced significantly as a result.

Dudley Council has released the figures as it continues to make good progress in improving social care services for children and young people in the borough.

In January last year, the council's children's services were rated as 'inadequate' following a visit by inspectors from government watchdog Ofsted.

But council bosses were praised for making 'positive progress' in a number of key areas after a follow-up monitoring visit by inspectors in February.

And the latest figures show the authority is continuing to move in the right direction.

One of the key areas identified for improvement by the council was to reduce the number of children in care.

The figures show there were a total of 674 children being looked after at the end of the current financial year.

That is nearly nine per cent down on the statistics for 2014/15, where there were 737 in the council's care.

Encouraging

Tony Oakman, Dudley Council's strategic director for people, said: "The figures are a very encouraging sign that we are continuing to move in the right direction.

"We recognise, of course, that there is still a long way to go and we will always strive to continue making improvements to the service we offer."

"If social workers have less cases to deal with, they are likely to be under less pressure and can put more time into each one.

"We want to reduce the number of children and young people being taken into care for their wellbeing and safety, where it is safe and appropriate to do so."

He added: "Our aim is that all children living in Dudley grow up safe, healthy and in a loving environment."

Lawyers help brewery find new pub

At the new site, from left, Tim Batham, Richard Griffiths, Katie Doyle, Richard Saxton and Matt Batham

A TEAM from Brierley Hill-based law firm Higgs & Sons has supported an iconic Black Country brewer in securing the right premises for what will be its 11th pub in the Midlands.

Bathams, also based in Brierley Hill, has announced that building work is already underway at the former offices at Palladium House in Worcester Road, Hagley, near Stourbridge.

The Higgs team also supported Bathams in acquiring the licence for its new premises which is scheduled to open in September.

The award-winning brewer has a proven track record of a commitment to real ale.

Higgs & Sons put together a team from its corporate, commercial and commercial property teams, headed up by Richard Saxton, commercial property partner; Richard Griffiths, corporate partner and commercial solicitor Katie Doyle. Mr Saxton said: "We acted for Bathams in acquiring the property as a speculative pub development, and naturally I am delighted to see the project now come to fruition."

Higgs & Sons and Bathams share a similar heritage, with both being family firms based in Brierley Hill, and while the legal firm celebrated its 140th anniversary in 2015, Bathams is celebrating its 140th anniversary this year.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Houses planned on a former pub site

AROUND 13 houses will be built on a former pub site in Wordsley.

The plots on The Swan Pub, in Brierley Hill Road, have been revised to provide a lounge and kitchen on the ground floor with bedroom and bathroom on the first floor and two bedrooms on second.

The plans were recently approved with conditions by Dudley Council planners.

No objections have been received to the proposal. There is also an existing right of way to the rear of the site that will be maintained under the plan.

Hospice to benefit from craft festival

A NEW food and craft festival will be held at Dudley Kingswinford Rugby Club in aid of Compton Hospice.

The family fun event will be held outdoors between 10am and 6pm on Saturday, June 10.

The festival, organised by the hospice, aims to showcase local traders and craftspeople and there will also be workshops for children, face-painting, a bouncy castle and live music. Tickets are £2.50 adults, free for under 12s.

For more information call Vicki Wootton on 0845 2255497, email vickiwootton@compton-hospice.org.uk

'Buddy bench' is donated to school

A HOUSEBUILDER has donated a 'buddy bench' has been donated to a primary school to foster friendship on the playground.

The brightly coloured bench has been gifted to Hagley Primary School by the McCarthy and Stone.

Lise Hyland, assistant headteacher at Hagley Primary School, said: "By having a buddy bench in the playground our children support each other when someone needs to talk or find someone to play with."

International Festival of Glass in August

THE International Festival of Glass is returning to Stourbridge Glass Quarter from August 25 to 28.

The seventh annual festival will include lectures, workshops, exhibitions, taster sessions and family activities across the individual festival sites including the Ruskin Glass Centre in Wollaston Road.

There will also be street entertainment and heritage walks.

For more information see the festival website ifg.org.uk.

Revenue up for hotels

MILLENNIUM & Copthorne Hotels, which includes the Copthorne Hotel in Brierley Hill, saw revenue rise by 16.1 per cent to £223 million in its first quarter to the end of March.

The Copthorne Hotel is near the Merry Hill shopping centre, on Level Street, and is a four-star hotel.

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IN MY VIEW
with Mark Andrews

Why is the old £1 coin taking a pounding

DISCOVERED any of the old paper £5 notes in your wallets or purses in the past week or two?

You will no doubt know they are no longer legal tender, and will have to be exchanged at the bank. It will be the same with the old, round £1 coins. While half the country's vending machines and parking meters do not seem to be ready for the new, multi-sided coins, we will still be expected to dispense with the old coins by October.

But why the indecent haste? The new fiver only entered circulation in September, yet in less than eight months it has become currency non-grata. The new pound coin has only been with us a few weeks, yet there seems to be a real hurry to get rid of them.

When the original pound coin was introduced in 1983, the old £1 note continued to be legal tender for another five years, allowing it to gradually be phased out without any inconvenience. I can't see any reason why they can't do the same today.

❒❒❒

THERE are many, many things on which I disagree with Jeremy Corbyn – giving children the vote for a start – but when it comes to hospital parking charges, he is spot on.

Having spent the past six weeks making twice-daily visits to a seriously ill loved, the experience was traumatic enough, without being fleeced over parking.

For most of that time I parked on a housing estate across the road, probably to the chagrin of residents. Well sorry folks, but I always took care to park legally and considerately.

Anyway, had I not done this, it would have cost me £4.60 every time, or £9.20 a day. That's just over £285 a month, the cost of a small mortgage. Or to put it another way, it is more than half the basic state pension.

Who has got that sort of money? Apart from the bigwigs who come up with ideas like this, of course.

❒❒❒

HOW to get people out to vote. Last week a leaflet came through the door for one of the candidates in my constituency, urging us not to worry about national politics, but to judge him on his record locally.

"The vote here will have no impact on the national picture," he says in his leaflet. Which I think roughly translates as "don't worry, the other side are going to win anyway."

Having known the gentleman in question for well over 20 years, I would agree that he is extremely hard-working and committed to his constituents.

But something is very wrong when a politician's election battle-cry is that a vote for him won't make any difference to how the country is run.

Political ramblings starting to reach a crescendo

Tony Blair in 1997, but how much did his victory have to do with his hunting ban pledge?

Is it a hare, or is it a Leprechaun? Answers on a postcard to....(not really!)

Jeremy Corbyn, denoting his A-level passes, all two of them. Yes, maths not a strong point

Will May be foxed in her hunt for power?

THE BEST OF PETER RHODES

"THE proverb that money does not buy you happiness is a lie put about by the rich to stop the poor killing them." Sir Michael Caine, as quoted this week by Max Hastings.

THERESA May says she supports fox hunting and would allow a free vote in Parliament on repealing the hunting ban. Big mistake. Hunting is a pastime enjoyed by only a few thousand people yet it offends millions. Successive opinion polls show that a majority of Britons – even in rural areas – are opposed to it. And while it is not something that would swing an election result alone, it is an issue which persuades people who might otherwise not vote to go to the polling station and vote against it.

HUNTING probably played a part in Tony Blair's 1997 landslide victory when Labour's manifesto included a promise to ban it. It certainly affected the Wolverhampton South West result where the lifelong hunter and Tory grandee Nick Budgen lost his seat to the passionately anti-hunt Jenny Jones. It was a surprising result (not least to Jones who resigned after just one term in the Commons). I was there at the count and will never forget the exultation as Labour's majority of 5,118 was announced. I wrote at the time: "As the feely-huggy brigade cheered Jenny Jones, a great roar went up, like a pack baying at the kill. And they reflected on how easily they had flushed out and culled the fox-hunting barrister in Wolverhampton South West. Tallyho." Cold logic tells us that the fate of a small furry predator should not influence great affairs of state. But it does, and by supporting the hunt Theresa May is risking millions of votes.

ISRAEL has released covert footage of a Palestinian hunger striker allegedly eating biscuits and sweets in his cell. I am reminded of a reader some years ago who solemnly informed me that, all other tactics having failed, he was going on hunger strike to pursue a grievance with his local council. Three hours later he rang to say he had called it off. Had he forced the council to back down? "No," he explained. "I was bloody famished."

A FORMER comrade of the hate preacher Anjem Choudary is reported to have returned from Syria to the UK where he is working as a pizza delivery rider. Hell, this is serious. In the great scheme of things, I bet far more lardy-arse Britons are killed every year by take-away pizza than by terrorism. Double-thick, special greasy 12-incher with extra spicy sausage for the infidel at No 33.

WALKING down the lane, I spotted a little chap not more than two feet tall with his arms folded. We studied each other, 100 yards apart. He turned out to be a hare standing on his back legs, and I've never seen any animal looking quite so human. I wonder if that's where leprechaun sightings came from.

THIS is the time of year when male pheasants – sometimes called the poor man's peacock – emerge in the greatest glory. They are as stately as an ibis, as richly hued as a bird of paradise and far better behaved than peacocks. We have one peacock in the garden at Chateau Rhodes who comes to the window with his harem of five hens and taps on the pane to be fed. Every human who sees him is bowled over by his iridescent plumage and dramatic scarlet wattles. The mystery is that his rather drab mates seem totally unimpressed by his display. His most dazzling courtship display is met by their utter indifference. Some weeks from now the chicks will appear. I often wonder how.

PREACHING the benefits of an inquiring mind, Jeremy Corbyn says: "I don't consider myself the world's greatest intellectual but you learnt from everybody, don't close your mind to the thoughts of others." Pity he didn't follow that mantra in his schooldays. Corbyn was a privileged pupil but despite the benefits of a prep school and grammar school, he achieved only two dismal E-grade passes in his A -levels. Like he says, not the world's greatest intellectual.

AND while we're on it, why this 1950s-style obsession with nationalising the railways and squeezing the banks until the pips squeak? Half the population hardly ever uses a train and how many of us even know a single investment banker, let alone blame him for our ills? If Really Old Labour wants my vote (and such a thing is not impossible), then get a grip on the dodgiest sector of them all. Nationalise the entire insurance industry with its mega-rich bosses, phony competition, utter contempt for loyal customers and endless payouts to 'whiplash victims' who are no such thing. Dozens of firms are selling identical policies with premiums vastly inflated to cover the cost of celebrity advertising and stuffed toys. Sweep it all away, create the British Insurance Authority, eliminate the industrial-scale corruption and give us proper insurance, for the people, by the people. Or is that too radical, Jez?

AS I'm on holiday this week, I'd be grateful if you would hold those emails for a few days. Especially you three-a-day correspondents. You know who you are.

TALKING POINT

I'm voting green, in the garden of course

GRIPPED by election fever? Thought not. I haven't been either.

Until, that is, I had 'visitors' the other evening and I suddenly had a rather good idea.

Why don't we, the electorate, offer up our own manifesto in place of all the waffle the political parties are inflicting on us? Let me explain.

There I was, out in the back garden, doing a bit of early evening weeding when . . . Ding-Dong.

Off come the gardening gloves and dusty old boots, and off I go to see who's at the door.

Trouble is, by the time I've traipsed through the house, all I can see is a group of them disappearing round the corner before I can even get to the front door.

They being half a dozen 'political' types who are obviously calling at as many homes as they can, simply to find out who the occupants intend to vote for. And how did I know they were canvassing for votes? Because two, yes two, party leaflets were on the mat in the porch. Such an impersonal calling card, I'm sure you'll agree.

Incidentally, the environmentally friendly types among you will be pleased to hear that the leaflets went straight in the recycling bin, which by coincidence was being emptied the next day.

So what would I have said if I'd got to the door in time?

They'll never know, but for the benefit of the next lot who come a' knocking, here goes.

Firstly, in case they think I need persuading to get out and vote on June 8, I have used every vote I've had since I turned 18, except for a European election when I could not get back from work in time before the polling station closed (yes, we journalists have the hardest job in the world!).

Second, there is one party I have never voted for and hope I never have to.

Next, there is one party I will vote for as a tactical move.

Then there is the 'default' party I have voted for when I cannot make my mind up about, or have been unimpressed by, any of the others.

Added to all this, there have been times when my choice has been based on, basically, me being vindictive against certain other candidates on the ballot paper.

Finally, there is a party whose principles I endorse but for a million and one reasons can't always find it in me to support.

So, what does my personal manifesto look like? Just one paragraph really.

The party which promises to outlaw cold calling by any political candidates or their representatives, thus leaving me in peace to get on with some gardening, gets my vote.

Now, if that's not a vote winner, I don't know what is.

STEVE PARLETT

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Avoid using plastic to save the planet

I HAVE heard that TV presenter Simon Reeve has taken a 'no single-use plastic' pledge in June. Reading about this has made me realise just how much plastic has taken over our lives and how often I buy a plastic bottle, drink the contents and discard it.

I am not a litter bug and will always throw the plastic item in a bin, in ideal circumstances in a specific recycling bin. But what if there was less plastic in the first place?

When the charge for plastic carrier bags came into effect, I couldn't believe the negative reaction from some people who were upset at having to pay 5p. We have become so indoctrinated into our convenient, cheap, throwaway ideology that we forget about the wider world. Fewer carrier bags has resulted in less litter and pollution – win-win for humans and animals alike.

Simon Reeve is taking up the pledge for a good reason – he's backing the Marine Conservation Society, which is asking people to give up single-use plastics for up to a month. Could I join Simon and give up conveniences like ready meals, pre-packed sandwiches and plastic-bottled drinks for a day, week or month? I don't know. But it would be interesting to try.

According to the society, the amount of plastic litter on our streets, parks, canals, rivers and beaches has risen by 180 per cent in 20 years. Plastic is often found in the stomachs of wildlife which lives in the seas, and can even kill them. Turtles are one example.

There are predictions that there could be more plastic than fish in our seas by 2050. Is that the world we want to leave our grandchildren?

ALAN DAVIS
Darlaston

Ramadan charity in community

IT is now the start of Ramadan, a month of many blessings, where one reflects on their life.

One of the obligations for a Muslim during the month of Ramadan is giving zakat, making charitable donations to the poor and needy. Most Muslims have always sent their zakat to Third World countries, where there is much starvation and donations are needed the most.

Not once did I ever imagine that in my own community that there would be people living in very desperate situations.

The first obligation is to help your closest in need. Many in the borough live in poverty and children go hungry. So, please, this year consider giving your zakat to your local food banks.

I will donate to my local food bank in Brierley Hill and I hope you will all help your local communities too.

Ramadan Mubarak To Everyone.

FATIMA ZARA
Brierley Hill

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

POST
Dudley Chronicle,
Chronicle Editorial,
51-53 Queen Street
Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES

EMAIL
dudley.chrons@expressandstar.co.uk

Letters should be brief and MUST include name, address and telephone number. The Editor reserves the right to condense letters.

Code of Practice: Our policy is to correct errors as soon as we can. The Chronicles adhere to the Editors' Code of Practice, which can be seen at

Estate's woodland walk is in a state

WE don't have much going for us on Russells Hall Estate, what with the rabbit run traffic coming through each day, hundreds of double parked cars from the hospital, numerous traffic calming bumps and the prospect of more traffic with new houses being built near the Spar supermarket.

But we do now have a new woodland walk at the top of Russells Hall Road. I'm sure everyone has noticed the lovely lawns on the left coming down the hill, which had not been cut since last year, are trimmed around the edges and a path has been cut through the trees, leaving all the weeds and leaves about two-feet high in the middle.

This must save Dudley Council at least half an hour a month in wages. I know we are looking for savings but this is a joke.

JOHN CAPEWELL
Dudley

Fury over care hit by the hackers

WOW, what a wake-up call and I'm really hacked off!

How dare lives be put at risk by "hackers"!

What right have these irresponsible people to electronically interfere with the medical care of thousands of people?

Who knows how many people have had cancer treatment delayed, or perhaps, life-saving operations cancelled?

If this hacking is state-sponsored, organised crime or some nerd in a bedroom, the reality is our NHS was brought to its knees.

This is a warning to us all, that the firewalls we have been lured into believing are protecting us, our health, economy, and security, obviously don't work.

So what have we learnt? It seems very little, if we haven't got back-up systems to protect our data, money and lives.

S T VAUGHAN
Birmingham

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Inquest hears of father's 999 call after stabbings

A FATHER whose wife and son were killed at their home phoned 999 to say that he too had been stabbed, an inquest was told.

Tracey Wilkinson, aged 50, and Pierce Wilkinson, 13, both died of multiple stab wounds on March 30, following the attack at their home in Greyhound Lane, Stourbridge.

Their husband and father Peter Wilkinson, aged 47, also suffered life-threatening injuries in the incident but survived.

Aaron Barley, aged 23, of no fixed address, has admitted attempted murder of Mr Wilkinson, but has not entered a plea on two counts of murder.

Last week Black Country Coroner Zafar Siddique opened the inquests on Tracey and Pierce, but adjourned it until the criminal case had concluded.

Coroner's officer Joanne Stokes said: "The circumstances were that on March 30 a call was received by police from Peter Wilkinson stating he had been stabbed at home.

Pierce Wilkinson, aged 13, died

Tracey Wilkinson was found dead

Flowers at the scene of the tragedy

Peter Wilkinson suffered serious injuries

Critical

"On arrival Peter was found in the garden and his wife and son were found in the house.

"Peter was taken to hospital in a critical condition and has now been released. Unfortunately Tracey was pronounced deceased and Pierce was pronounced deceased at Birmingham Children's Hospital on March 30. The cause of death for Tracey Wilkinson was multiple stab wounds and for Pierce it is multiple stab wounds."

Detective Chief Inspector Ed Foster also spoke at the hearing to provide an update on Barley's case saying he would next appear at Birmingham Crown Court on July 19.

Mr Wilkinson and his daughter Lydia Wilkinson, aged 18, were not present at the hearing, which lasted less than 20 minutes.

Coroner Mr Siddique said: "In light of the circumstances and the tragic deaths of Pierce and Tracey Wilkinson I am going to formally suspend the inquest pending the outcome of the criminal trial. "I have heard a further hearing is taking place in July so I will formally suspend the hearing until after then.

"May I take this opportunity to offer my sincere and deepest condolences for the family's loss in these tragic circumstances."

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Tax credits, benefits and debt top list of citizen worries

RESIDENTS in the Black Country are most likely to seek help with benefits and tax credits than any other problem, new figures reveal.

Citizens Advice services in Dudley, Sandwell, Walsall and Wolverhampton say benefits represented one third of all queries in the 12 months up to March 31, followed by debt issues.

The top five issues were benefits and tax credits with 58,200, debt (49,200), financial services and capability (11,250), housing (8,850) and employment (6,900).

It was the third year benefits and tax credits had topped the table in the Black Country.

In total, 48,500 people turned to Citizens Advice in the Black Country for support with 161,050 problems. This represents an increase of five per cent of clients compared to the year before.

People were most likely to seek help with benefits because of difficulties with Personal Independence Payments or Employment Support Allowance, the figures showed.

Free

Helen Child, chief officer of Citizens Advice Wolverhampton, said: "The four Citizens Advice in the Black Country provide free, confidential and independent advice to help thousands of people overcome their problems every year.

"In the last financial year we saw a particularly high number of people who were experiencing problems with Personal Independence Payment. We were able to help people make applications and challenge decisions when mistakes were made."

There are four independent Citizens Advice services in the Black Country, including Dudley.

See www.citizensadvice.org.uk or call 03444 111444. For consumer issues call 03454 040506.

Rock tribute is brewed by brothers

A PAIR of Black Country brewing brothers have created a new ale in tribute to the American grunge rock star Chris Cornell, who died last week in tragic circumstances.

The singer with US bands Soundgarden and Audioslave died last Wednesday, aged 52, apparently as a result of suicide.

James and Thomas Fownes, of Fownes Brewing Company, at the Jolly Crispin pub in Upper Gornal, were fans of the musician and have brewed a red American pale ale, called By Crooked Steps after one of his Soundgarden songs.

Charity

They will be donating £10 from the sale of each cask to the charity CALM (Campaign Against Living Miserably).

It is dedicated to preventing male suicide, which is the single biggest killer of men under the age of 45 in the UK.

Word up – speakers' club beat rivals

Stourbridge Speakers Club, team members pictured, competed against Bromsgrove for the Blarney Stone award

A SPEAKERS club is celebrating after winning a much coveted title against a Midlands rival.

Stourbridge Speakers Club competed against Bromsgrove Speakers Club in a competition for the Blarney Stone award.

The competition involves each team putting forward four team members to compete against the opposing club to deliver prepared speeches using identical predetermined agreed topics. These were seaside, country and town and each club had to deliver one speech in each category.

This year Stourbridge's team included two new participants, one of which was a new member to the club. The competition was judged by three judges from different clubs. They praised the quality of all the speakers from the night.

The competition was a close run thing with the final voting resulting in a 2-1 majority vote in favour of Stourbridge.

After winning this year's competition, the club remain open to new members. Meetings are held on alternative Monday evenings between 8pm and 10pm at the Stourbridge Institute, off Bell Street.

For more information on joining the club, call 07544 198309 or go to stourbridgespeakers.org.uk for more information.

Carers spread word about the 'best job'

NATIONAL foster care fortnight is well underway and Dudley Council's foster carers are helping to spread the word about the 'best job in the world'.

The borough's foster carers have been sharing their inspiring stories on the service's new website www.fosteringindudley.org.uk and the videos have been produced to give people interested in fostering a first-hand account of what it's really like to foster.

Carers Lee and James, Vanessa and Roz bring to life their fostering journeys and talk about how they've helped to transform lives.

The website also hosts lots of useful information and provides an easy and fast way to get in touch with Dudley's fostering service.

Tony Oakman, strategic director – people, said: "With the launch of our website and our open day at the beginning of this week, so far we've had a really successful foster care fortnight, positively highlighting the important and rewarding foster carer role.

"Our foster carers really are inspiring and the real carer videos on our website highlight this.

"We're always happy to hear from anyone who feels they can offer a safe, caring and stable home to children looked after by Dudley borough."

Visit www.fosteringindudley.org.uk or calling (01384) 815833.

Romantic author is to give library talk

A BLACK Country romance author will be visiting Gornal Library in Abbey Road, Lower Gornal, to give an informative talk.

Dudley-born writer Michael Taylor will be discussing his work on July 26 from 7pm onwards. His published works include novels Eve's Daughter (2002) and Linden Woods (2007), both set in the Black Country. Places for the Friends of Gornal Library event can be booked on (01384) 812755.

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Hugh leads the way in charity cycle challenge

THEY came, they saw, they conquered – hundreds of cyclists took on the hills of Shropshire, all in the name of charity.

More than 700 entrants for the second Round the Wrekin sportive, set to raise thousands of pounds for Wolverhampton's Compton Hospice.

Cyclists took part in one of three challenges – the epic 100 mile route, the standard 64 mile route and the short, 24 mile course, named the Hugh Porter route.

Cycling legend Hugh, who took part in the 24 miles route, said he was delighted with the turnout and stayed throughout the day to give medals to those taking part.

He added: "It's great to beat last year's target, for such a good cause. I'm just happy to be involved. Somewhere in life most families get touched with cancer – I lost my sister and I lost my uncle in the hospice, so there's a certain amount of poignancy there to be involved.

"I rode with a group of club mates and people I've ridden with over the years, some people I go way back to school with. There's a nice comradery with cyclists, it's been a great day."

With riders aged from 10 to 85, cyclists made trips from as far Northern Ireland to take part. Some dusted off tandems and one woman – Karen Flavell, 53, from Wombourne – took on the race after undergoing a heart transplant just three years ago. She said: "Three years ago almost to do the day I had my heart transplant. I had cardiomyopathy all my life, but things started deteriorating ten years ago – it got to the point where I needed a new one. It's great now I can do anything."

Hugh Porter leads the charity cycling event, which set off from Dudley Kingswinford Rugby Club

Jobless figures are up across borough

THE number of people claiming unemployment benefits in the Dudley borough rose last month.

It came after the unemployment total in the West Midlands fell by 5,000 to 161,000 in the three months to March.

Nationally the unemployment rate fell to a 42-year low with a record number of people in work, Office for National Statistics figures show.

Those claiming in Dudley, including Jobseeker's Allowance and Universal Credit, were up 45 on March to 5,925 – 3.1 per cent of the working population.

Councillor David Sparks, Dudley Counncil's cabinet member for finance, said: "There's no particular reason why there should be such a small movement in the statistics. The fundamental problem for Dudley and the rest of the Black Country isn't how many people are in work, but what skills they have and are able to obtain in order to stay in employment or gain other jobs."

South Staffordshire also saw a rise of 20 to 790 (1.2 per cent) and Wyre Forest, including Kidderminster, was up five to 835 (1.4 per cent).

Judge says tax cheat builder was 'greedy'

A 'GREEDY' builder from Stourbridge who fiddled his expenses in a bid to cut his tax bill by more than £30,000 has been jailed for 18 months.

Adam Turner started the ruse after reckoning he had been short changed by an employer, a judge heard at Wolverhampton Crown Court.

The 45-year-old family man had allegedly been promised additional expenses on top of his wages but ended up with less money being paid into his bank account than he had expected, so he decided to make up the difference with bogus tax deductible expense claims, the court was told.

He continued the racket when the supposed short fall had been recouped and illegally claimed a total of £31,405 in eight months before a tax inspector found out, said Mr James Bruce, prosecuting.

The Inland Revenue managed to put a stop on £9,554 of the requested refunds meaning that Turner still walked away with £21,851 he was not entitled to.

Recover

The Inland Revenue will now have to take civil action to recover the money.

Mr Simon Hanns, defending, said: "He has changed his working practices considerably since this happened. He became self employed during the period of the offence.

"His own business is now controlled entirely by his accountant. It is highly unlikely that he will ever come before a court again."

By John Scott

Mr Hanns said: "It started because he was being cut short by his employer but accepts that what he did after that was unacceptable and is thoroughly ashamed."

Turner, of Riversleigh Drive, Stourbridge, admitted 10 charges of tax evasion between October 3, 2011, and April 12, 2012.

He was sent to prison by Judge Barry Berlin who told him: "This was greedy, cynical and persistent offending.

"There was no need for it. People get desperate and do not thieve in this way. You got the taste for easy money.

"You invented vastly inflated expenses, which had never been incurred, to claim money back from the Inland Revenue. The claims did not come from anywhere other than your imagination.

"This was a serious matter and the general public rightly expect anybody who defrauds the Revenue to have an immediate custodial term. It is important that this message goes out because people who do this are stealing from all of us."

Chance to join the cast of Dolly musical

A THEATRE group is preparing to stage its new show later this year and there's a chance to join the cast.

Cradley Heath Amateur Operatic Society, known as CHAOS, will be performing Dolly Parton's 9 to 5 – The Musical this November. The group is looking for fresh talent, mainly male performers and dancers, to take part.

Group spokesman, Paul Murdock, said: "New members will be welcomed into the 'family' of the longest established amateur operatic society in the Black Country and whilst we rehearse regularly in the Old Hill area, we also hold social events such as quiz and race nights as well as the annual trip to London and dinner dance. We like to support local actors, singers and dancers."

The musical will be the group's first show in its new home venue, Stourbridge Town Hall. Email the group on chaos@chaosoperatics.co.uk or call (01384) 293913.

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Celebration in memory of Joel

A DAY of 'celebration and reflection' will be held in memory of Tunisia terror victim Joel Richards.

Birmingham County Football Association, which Joel served as a referee, will hold the event at its base in Ray Hall Lane on Saturday.

Joel, 19, was killed in Tunisia in 2015 alongside his uncle Adrian Evans and grandfather Patrick Evans. He was a highly-rated young match official, who was also actively involved in a number of areas of the grassroots game across Birmingham. He also served as chairman of the Birmingham County FA's Youth Council, which provided a voice for young people on the development of the game at local level.

A match will take place in the afternoon, which will see friends, family and colleagues of Joel take part.

Entry will be made by donation, with all money raised going straight into the Joel Richards Foundation Legacy Fund.

Vengeful party yob is jailed for arson attack on Mini

A 21ST BIRTHDAY party ended disastrously when a disgruntled guest set fire to the car of the hostess in revenge attack after being asked to leave the celebrations, a court heard.

John Dalloway and his girlfriend were booted out when she got involved in a fight and he threatened to 'take them all on.'

Wolverhampton Crown Court was told that police were called and, after his girlfriend had been arrested, 30-year-old Dalloway went to a garage in the early hours of March 5 and filled a container with 1.5 litres of petrol.

He returned to the party's location in Childs Avenue, Woodcross, where he doused a Mini parked on the driveway and set it on fire, said Mr Edward Soulsby, prosecuting.

He was seen crouched by the car sparking a lighter moments before the vehicle burst into flames. Several people used buckets of water in an unsuccessful bid to put out the blaze that threatened another parked car on the drive and the house itself, before it was extinguished by firefighters.

Father-of-three Dalloway was arrested soon afterwards with a receipt found in his vehicle confirmed he had bought petrol shortly, a purchase confirmed by the filling station's CCTV.

Mr Jon Roe, defending the self-employed builder from Tansey Green Road, Dudley, said: "It was a moment of madness after he had been drinking and taking drugs."

Dalloway, who had four previous convictions for criminal damage, pleaded guilty to arson and was jailed for four years and three months.

Judge Barry Berlin said that the defendant posed a significant risk of causing serious harm to the public and ordered that he been monitored for two years afer release.

John Dalloway – jailed

Centre hope for go-kart cash

A PLAY centre in the Black Country is hoping for a donation from a supermarket giant to help replace go-karts that were wrecked by vandals.

Sycamore Adventure Centre in Dudley has been chosen to take part in Tesco's Bags of Help Grant Schemeand could net up to £4,000 if it gets enough votes from shoppers this month and next.

The centre launched an appeal for £3,000 after vandals scaled its fence last month and went on a wrecking spree, leaving most of its go-karts beyond repair.

So far more than £1,000 has been raised, including an undisclosed donation from TV comedian Joe Lycett, who visited the site in March for Comic Relief.

Voting is open at Tesco and Tesco Express branches across Dudley, Sedgley and Gornal. Customers can cast their vote a token given at the check-out.

Denise urges women to get on their bike

Denise Lewis is leading the Pink Ribbon Tour ride on June 11

BLACK Country Olympic hero Denise Lewis OBE is encouraging women to hop on a bike and cycle to support women with breast cancer.

The former gold-medal winning athlete will swap the track for a bike in the 25km cycle as she encourages women to join her for the Pink Ribbon Tour.

The 44-year-old from Wolverhampton will join 1,000 women in London on June 11 for the ride through the closed streets of the capital, ahead of the professional cyclists taking part in the final stage of The Women's Tour.

As a Breast Cancer Care Ambassador Mrs Lewis is cycling the 25km after losing her grandmother to the disease.

She said: "I've had close family and friends affected by breast cancer, that is why I'm cycling in the first Pink Ribbon Tour in London."

The registration fee is £32.50 for women aged 18 and over, 16 to 17 year-old girls must be accompanied by an adult. For those who cannot get to London, Denise is asking them to organise their own event. Go to breastcancercare.org.uk/pinkribbontour for further details.

Steel giant Tata is back in the black

TATA Steel is back in the black thanks to improving sales and a boost from its supply chain operations, including investment at its key Steelpark site in Wednesfield.

The Indian-owned steel group's European arm had been hit by cheap Chinese steel imports, aggravating productivity and pension problems at its UK operations. But a major revamp and new pension deal with unions has put the steel giant back on track.

It has also invested £20 million at its 50-acre Steelpark in the Black Country, the largest steel service centre in the UK where it employs 525 people. In February it unveiled a £4m new robot welding line at Wednesfield to produce more than two million car parts a year. This helped boost figures for Tata Steel Europe, pushing profits to £230m in its best quarterly performance since 2008.

Tata Steel also employs around 100 at its Walsall and Brierley Hill plants.

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Couple fully deserve jail sentences, say top judges

A COUPLE jailed over a fraud which ruined the big day for hundreds of brides have been told by top judges they deserved to be locked up.

Bake A Cake Catering boss Lisa Holt, aged 41, conned brides-to-be out of thousands of pounds by cheating customers out of cash for cakes and other wedding services which never materialised.

Between May 2014 and August 2015 her Halesowen-based firm had more than 700 victims. Some brides had to cancel their weddings. Most customers booked their services for weddings but others were for birthdays and also a funeral.

Mrs Holt's fraud totalled £104,000 – almost half of which was via the online site Wowcher, through which she 'sold' services including a chocolate fountain and photobooths. Wowcher had to compensate customers to the tune of £46,000. Her husband, Ryan Holt, 42, helped her launder the money. The pair, of Albert Road, Halesowen, were jailed at Wolverhampton Crown Court in January, with Mrs Holt receiving three years and her husband nine months. She admitted three counts of fraud, while he admitted converting criminal property.

The couple tried to have their sentences cut, with their lawyers arguing the judge didn't take enough account of the fact the sentences would deprive the couple's children of their parents. But both appeals were rejected.

Dismissing Mr Holt's case, Mr Justice Green said: "The judge reduced his sentence substantially to take account of the position of the children. But it is evident there is no absolute duty upon a court to suspend a sentence, simply because children are involved."

Sitting with Lady Justice Thirlwall and Judge Simon Bourne-Arton QC, he also rejected Mrs Holt's appeal, saying she had shown no sympathy for the hundreds of victims.

More children seek help on exam stress

HUNDREDS of children in the West Midlands are being counselled for overwhelming exam stress, new research reveals.

Counsellors carried out 850 sessions in the past two years mostly with youngsters in the 12-15 year age group. However, this year saw the biggest rise, up by 21 per cent on 2015-16, amongst16 - 18 year olds preparing for A-levels. More than a fifth of the counselling sessions took place in May. Pupils faced with exams are turning to Childline, telling counsellors they are struggling with subjects and excessive workloads.

The figures, released by the NSPCC, showed that its West Midlands' base in Birmingham, which also serves the Black Country, was contacted mostly by girls, 496 compared to 354 boys.

Peter Wanless, chief executive of the NSPCC said: "It is vital that young people are supported by family, friends and teachers during the exam period."

Car smashes into kitchen of home

Police say a driver has been arrested after a car smashed through the side of a house in Pensnett leaving a gaping hole

A CAR ploughed through the side of a home in Pensnett, leaving the stunned family saying they were lucky to have escaped unharmed.

The vehicle smashed into the kitchen of the house in Chelmar Drive, sending bricks, a washing machine and tumble dryer flying across the room.

The 30-year-old driver, who was left with bruising to his face, was arrested by police.

Father-of-two Simon Husselbee, 44, an ambulance driver, was inside the house at the time alongside his 11-year-old daughter Katie, and seven-year-old son Ethan – who were all upstairs.

His wife Sally, 39, also an ambulance driver, was returning from work at the time of crash, which happened at around 3.55pm on Wednesday, May 17. Firefighters had to remove the car before they propped up the building for safety.

Mr Husselbee said: "The police said it was lucky no-one was in the kitchen at the time."

The impact left a gaping hole and it meant the Husselbee family had to find temporary accommodation. They have been in touch with their insurance company.

Eleven-year-old Katie, walking down the stairs at the time, thought the kitchen had exploded, her father Simon said.

New mayor to help the homeless

THE first meeting has taken place of a task force set up by West Midlands Mayor Andy Street to tackle homelessness and rough sleeping in towns and cities across the region.

The Mayor's Homelessness Task Force gathered for the first time on Friday and includes Police and Crime Commissioner David Jamieson and West Midlands Police Assistant Chief Constable Alex Murray. It includes national and regional charities such as St Basil's, the Royal British Legion, SIFA Fireside, Langar Aid, Emmaus Coventry and Dudley-based CHADD.

It also features representatives from housing groups, local authorities and business organisations.

Mr Street said: "The message that came back from people I spoke to on the election campaign was that they want the Mayor to tackle the issue of rough sleeping.

"Frankly, it's a situation that shames us as a region. This is why I am personally going to lead the response.

"Reflecting on the meeting, it is clear there is already lots of brilliant work, notably from the charity sector.

"However, there is also a clear need for co-ordination addressing the underlying issues. This is about everybody working together, using the resources we have and securing new resources, to solve the challenge."

College gives pupils inspiration on work

WORKSHOPS and career advice handed out to get pupils about to leave school ready for the workplace.

Halesowen College's 'work-related learning' day supported year 10 pupils from Aldersley High School, Balaam Wood, Bartley Green, The Earls, Pedmore Technology College and St Michaels. Pupils came into college for workshops. Those represented included the Army, NHS, Mary Stevens Hospice and West Midlands Fire.

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Brothers jailed after stealing half a £5 note

TWO bungling brothers from Tividale escaped with just half a worthless torn five pound note when they raided a Black Country filling station, a judge heard.

The pair made a grab for cash in the till at the same time as a quick thinking assistant seized the fiver too and lost a tug of war over the note, Wolverhampton Crown Court was told.

But the robbery still cost half-brothers Gareth Donnelly and Barry Millward dear when they were jailed for a total of five and a half years.

Staff were suspicious when the duo walked into Apple Green Services, also known as Tamebridge Services, in Bridge Street, Wednesbury on September 9, said Mr Christopher O'Gorman, prosecuting.

The woman behind the counter carried on serving other customers until the two men were the only ones left inside the shop.

Millward, aged 36, was standing by the entrance and told his brother 'just buy some chocolate', continued the prosecutor.

Bungling criminal brothers Barry Millward, left, and Gareth Donnelly

Lunge

Donnelly did as he was told and proffered a £1 coin as payment for the confectionary. As soon as the till was opened to get his change, the 35-year-old made a lunge for the cash inside, the court heard.

Mr O'Gorman continued: "As he made a grab for the money the female assistant instinctively pushed it further into the till."

Then a customer who had just left the store noticed the disturbance and returned to throw a drinks can at Millward, hitting him on the head. The thieves then fled with their half a five pound note.

The woman assistant later told police Donnelly had grabbed her hand during the bungled bid to snatch the money but did not injure her.

Both men had a long list of previous convictions.

Millward's included robbery, burglary, blackmail, theft and assault. Mr Zaheer Afzal, defending, explained that the father-of- four had been blighted by Class A drug addiction for years despite unsuccessful attempts at rehabilitation.

Donnelly, of Dale Terrace, and Millward, of Trafalgar Court, Birmingham New Road, Tividale, both admitted robbery and were each jailed for two and half years. Millward also received a consecutive six month sentence for breaking the terms of his bail.

Judge Michael Challinor said: "Robbery is always a serious offence but this falls into the lowest category. There was minimal force used and minimal harm done."

But the judge also told him: "This must have cost taxpayers thousands of pounds. I was then told you had lied and police were unable to trace you until a warrant was issued for your arrest. This was a cynical manipulation of the justice system."

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FIVE MINUTES FROM MERRY HILL

An atmospheric image of Monmore Green Stadium

Wolverhampton Wolves rider Jacob Thorssell in action

Queen of Speedway Fay Taylour featured in the photography exhibition

Photographer on track to share love of speedway at exhibition

A KEEN motorsport photographer showcased snaps of the rip-roaring world of speedway – and said he hoped the display would get more people into in the sport.

MEMORY LANE

By Jamie Brassington

Jon George, and his friends, exhibited around 100 pictures at Wolverhampton Central Library.

The stunning images ranged from riders in the heat of the action at Wolverhampton's Monmore Green Stadium, to historic black and white photographs taken at the Haynes International Motor Museum, in Somerset.

Jon, chairman of the Compton G Camera based at Tettenhall Wood Institute, hopes the display has inspired people to take an interest in the sport.

The exhibition comes after the camera club was granted rare access to capture the racing in action up close and personal at Monmore Green, home to the Parrys International Wolves and Elite League winners last season. Current riders, including Jacob Thorssell, featured in the display.

Promoter Chris Van Straaten gave the photographers an unobstructed view from the centre of the track in March.

Jon also added historic photographs which he took at the motor museum. The snaps include two female riders, Fay Taylour 'the Queen of Speedway' and Eva Asquith,who were both big names in the sport in the 1920s.

In addition, Jon threw in atmospheric pictures from Monmore Green, capturing behind the scenes of the racing action.

The 68-year-old, from Merry Hill in Wolverhampton, said: "We decided to focus the exhibition on the speedway because several of our members like the sport.

"I hope it would encourage people to take an interest in speedway.

"The majority of the photographs were what we had taken this year but it was also interesting to focus on the history of the speedway."

One black and white image captures Fay and Eva shaking hands as they sit on their respective motorbikes side by side, while what appears to be race organisers stand behind the two female riders.

Flying

Another old photograph shows Fay sitting astride a speedway motorcycle inside of a building or stadium. The photograph taken from the side, shows the Irish rider, known as 'Flying Fay' wearing a long coat with a fur collar.

Taylour was regarded as the best female rider of her day.

Jon said he believed Fay held the track record at Crystal Palace and beat a lot of male riders But in the 1930s women were banned from speedway because it could be awkward for medics to remove clothing if they had an accident, Jon said.

"It wasn't until the 1990s women were allowed to compete again in speedway," he said. During his visit to the museum, Jon had a surprise encounter with a former world champion rider whose career spanned the 1950s to the 70s.

"I was taking photographs there and someone tapped me on the back," said Jon. "It was Barry Briggs, he is like the Stanley Matthews of speedway. There are display boards there at the museum about him."

Jon, originally from Somerset, used to see grass-track races while he lived down south, which is a similar type of motorbike racing to speedway.

But it wasn't until he moved to Wolverhampton in 1969 that he got his first glimpse of the sport, during the era of world champion 'Great Dane' Ole Olsen, who raced for Wolverhampton Wolves between 1970 and 75.

Ole also features in the exhibition. On one image, he can be seen in pack of riders who are racing at Wembley, in 1976, in the Intercontinental Final and is joined by Ivan Mauger and Doug Wyer.

The 1976 Intercontinental Final at Wembley

The Queen of Speedway Fay Taylour and Eva Asquith

Pub gets heart machine in memory of Alex, 25

Jamie Richards, left, from AED Donate, pictured with Tony Martin, Lizzy Hughes and Rebecca Marshall at the pub

A LIFE-SAVING defibrillator has been installed in a Rowley Regis pub in memory of a man who died from an undiagnosed heart condition.

Alex Brown, from East Park, Wolverhampton, died suddenly at the age of 25 in April 2015, after suffering from a fatal cardiac arrest.

His family and friends, including girlfriend Rebecca Marshall, have been raising funds to pay for heart screening for young people aged between 14 and 35, through the national charity Cardiac Risk in the Young. They also want to install public access defibrillators in places memorable to Alex with the help of Stone charity AED Donate.

A defibrillator has been installed at the Four Ways Pub, Portway Hill, Rowley Regis.

His sister Rachel Dingle said her fit and healthy brother was loved by all. "His laugh and sense of humour were infectious," she added.

Friend Lizzy Hughes has organised fundraising fashion shows at Rowley Hall Primary School.

"We can never bring Alex back but we can hope that we can leave the lasting legacy he deserves," said Rachel.

Alex Brown, died suddenly aged 25

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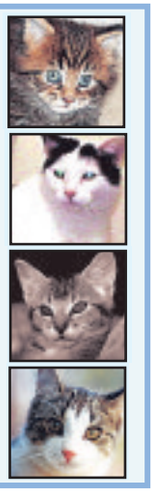

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Aquafit course at leisure centre

A NEW class has started for people looking to splash their way into shape ahead of the summer holidays.

It runs every Tuesday from 7pm to 7.45pm at the Dudley Council-owned Crystal Leisure Centre in Bell Street, Stourbridge.

It costs £5 to take part with a 50 per cent discount available for Options+ leisure discount holders.

Andy Webb, interim head of sport and leisure, said: "Aquafit is an exercise class in the water set to music. You don't have to be able to swim to do it, and it is particularly good for people who struggle with other exercise because of joint pains."

For further information on classes and activities borough leisure centres, visit dudley.gov.uk/sport or call (01384) 812800.

Ringing changes with bid to make church a community hub

A CHURCH that closed earlier this year could be brought back to life by campaigners who want to buy the historic building.

St John's United Reformed Church in Stourbridge went on the market a few weeks ago after it shut following its final service in January.

Now dance company, Danse Vivante, says that it wants to use its 'funds and love' to keep the church as a community space.

Hundreds of signatures have also been gathered on a petition to save the building, after being launched just a few days ago.

Pippa Coley, who has trained with the dance academy for four years, said that they have high hopes for the future of the building.

She explained: "The church is really local to us as we are based in Halesowen.

"We had everything in place ready to buy another church in Redditch recently but sadly that fell through.

"So when we saw that St John's had come up for sale we knew that we wanted to get involved straight away.

"There has been quite a lot of interest in it from what I hear, but the main thing is we don't want it to be turned into accommodation or knocked down as that would be a crying shame."

The group says that they hope to keep the building intact, with it being Grade II listed, but there would be minor alterations inside.

Ms Coley added: "The roof needs fixing but we have plans to make the inside usable. We want it to be a real hub.

"It is incredibly exciting and the perfect building for us to expand and bring to life for all the community."

OAPs help keep birds on track

PENSIONERS has helped spruce up a disused rail corridor that runs on the proposed Wednesbury to Brierley Hill route for the Midland Metro.

Members of the Senior Citizens Enterprise Woodwork group in Dudley gave up their time and have built a variety of bird habitats to be installed along the corridor.

The group made 52 boxes to add to a further 50 boxes already purchased by the Midland Metro Alliance, which is building a number of new tram extensions for the West Midlands Combined Authority.

It is hoped that the 102 bird boxes will attract a wide-range of nesting birds.

For more information on the woodwork group, contact William Darby at wdarby@sky.com

Wagner brings X Factor

Dan Malin, PR at Mary Stevens Hospice with Wagner Carrilho and Amanda Bowen, deputy head of fundraising and lottery at Mary Stevens Hospice

X Factor runner-up Wagner Fiuza-Carrilho, who many will remember for his hilarious and eccentric performances on the popular TV show, will return to the spotlight in two special charity shows.

The flamboyant Brazilian-born singer, who lives in the Black Country, will be playing the Wizard of Oz in aid of Mary Stevens Hospice next year.

The Dudley-based performer shot to stardom in 2010, when he finished sixth on the X-Factor in a season that included the likes of Cher Lloyd, Matt Cardle and Rebecca Ferguson.

His high-energy performances cemented him in the hearts of the British public, as he covered classic pop songs on the ITV talent show, including a mash-up of Love Shack and She Bangs.

Wagner will play The Wizard in the show on January 23 and 24 at the Brierley Hill Civic Hall.

Roadworks finished on busy major route

ROADWORKS running for around ten months to tackle congestion on a busy road in the Black Country are complete.

The £1.5 million scheme on the Birmingham New Road in Coseley started August last year.

Lane restrictions were put in place on the dual carriageway during off-peak hours. But on Sunday, following months of disruption, it was finally finished.

It has seen the creation of new filter lanes and improved pedestrian crossings and conditions for cyclists. Bus priority measures have also been introduced.

During the work, lane restrictions were in place off-peak hours of 9.30am to 3.30pm, Monday to Friday.

It was then extended in January, when the lane closures went round-the-clock.

The decision was made in order for the work to meet the deadline.

The work was aimed at combatting congestion on the road, which is used to get from Wolverhampton to Dudley, Oldbury and the M5.

It was also designed to address road safety concerns following a series of accidents.

It was a joint venture between Wolverhampton and Dudley Councils.

Emphasis on healthy eating

A CARE home has appointed a new manager who plans to introduce a new health and nutrition programme for residents.

Wallence Miyoba, who has 14 years experience in the care and adult support sector, has taken up position at the Foresters Nursing Home in Clent.

The home, owned by care company Clarendon Care Group, has 30 residents.

Wallence said: "As manager, I want to make sure our care continues to be of the highest standard but I also want to work closely with residents to ensure they have a healthy and nutritious diet through a new programme I want to introduce."

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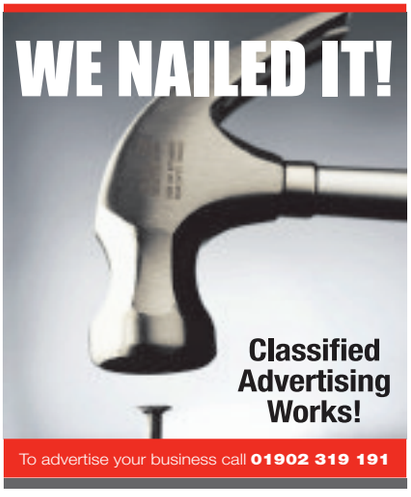

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Haunting tale still a chiller

The Woman in Black, Wolverhampton Grand

SUSAN Hill's ghost story about a vengeful spirit has been turned into a TV drama, a hit movie and a popular play that's been running in London's West End for quarter of a century.

The story is told again in the touring production of the late Stephen Mallatratt's study in terror. It tells of an Edwardian solicitor, Arthur Kipps, who encounters The Woman in Black when sorting out the affairs of a deceased client in a remote mansion on an island in the marshes.

In Mallatratt's ingenious version, the older Kipps attempts to exorcise his terrifying experience by employing an actor to help him tell his tale to an audience of family and friends. But there is a macabre twist.

With few props, a sometimes ear-splitting soundscape and atmospheric lighting in which threatening shadows loom, Matthew Spencer's enthusiastic Actor and David Acton's reticent Kipps conjure up the tragic tale of a bitter and malevolent ghost. They weave in some light relief, thanks to an imagined dog and a few digs at the craft of acting.

There is a third cast member, of whom it is not wise to say too much, but her appearances will produce a shudder. There are at least half a dozen jump in your seat moments.

The Woman in Black continues to haunt the Grand Theatre until Saturday. Go... if you dare.

Julian Capolei, William Grint and Matthew Jacobs-Morgan in Tommy at Birmingham Rep

Tommy – hear this, feel this potent show

THEATRE REVIEWS

by Leon Burakowski

Tommy, Birmingham Rep

SEE me, feel me, touch me, heal me – the haunting refrain returns again and again in this powerful and poignant version of The Who's rock opera Tommy.

First created by Pete Townsend as a concept album in 1969, revamped as a flamboyant movie by Ken Russell in '75, it now makes a rare sortie to the stage in this delirious, soulfully sung production with theatre company Ramps on the Moon.

Ramps are an inclusive company of deaf, disabled and non-disabled actors and musicians, and this is their strength as they bring innovation to the story about a 'deaf, dumb and blind kid', staged on a stark metallic set. Sign language is weaved into movement and dance as the woefully abused Tommy retreats into his own world after the murder of his RAF airman father – until becoming a Pinball Wizard, a messiah figure for the counter-culture.

The singing is stunning. Natasha Lewis (in various roles) and Shekinah McFarlane (as the voice of Tommy's mother, played by Donna Mullings) brought soul power to the rock score. Julien Capolei and Matthew Jacobs-Morgan sang for Tommy, the plaintive William Grint. Credit also to the singing of Alim Jayda as stepdad Frank and Amy Trigg as Tommy's only friend, Sally.

The uncomfortable 'Fiddle About' scene in which Tommy is sexually abused by his Uncle Ernie (Garry Robson) is creepily suggested. Lukas Alexander is a whirling demonic presence as the bully Cousin Kevin.

The star turn has to be theatre veteran Peter Straker as the formidable Acid Queen, presented as an over-the-hill drag act, who is gifted a new song from Townsend, Acid Queen 2. Straker doesn't hold back.

Tommy is a manic musical, flawed but fascinating with some great tunes. I doubt there will be many better productions of it than this, at Birmingham Rep to Saturday.

Rhubarb! Boycs gives his sport the stick with help from Aggers

An Evening with Boycott & Aggers, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

HE may be forthright and opinionated, but Geoffrey Boycott talks a lot of sense when it comes to cricket, particularly the current state of the game.

The Yorkshire and England legend was in Wolverhampton as part of a tour to mark the 40th anniversary of one of his greatest achievements, scoring his 100th first class century. There were a few surprise video moments thrown in too, as well as other archive footage, while Test Match Special colleague Jonathan Agnew, having climbed off his sick bed, kept proceedings going.

'Aggers' asked the questions in the first half before reading out those posed by the 700-strong audience after the interval. Boycott,15 years on from being given three months to live, has proven as stoic as he ever did at the crease.

He even brought on a stick of rhubarb as a prop, and demonstrated how to play a forward defensive with it.

It wasn't one of Boycott's longest innings, but it was one of his most entertaining. **Mark Shipp**

It's Rich pickings from USA

Rich Hall, Stourbridge Town Hall

THE grizzled grump from Montana came to the not-so-Wild West Midlands to mine for comedy gold the cultural chasm between the UK and the USA.

Hall benefits from a face that looks like it's been left out in the desert, a hound dog expression to match his downbeat humour. But a smile plays at the edge of his mouth as he questions his Stourbridge audience searching for a trucker or any kind of blue collar worker but comes up with an accountant, IT consultant and a business analyst.

He knows England well and has a Liverpudlian wife. In the gag-slinging first half he looks at the differences between the two countries, such as the enormous portion sizes of American meals, the wallet-emptying health 'care' system and, of course, Trump.

In the second hour he brings on his musical compadres for the Hoedown where he sings comic country songs. The one about Bob Dylan's disappointing concerts was a treat – 'as he murdered Maggie's Farm, it set off my car alarm'. **LB**

COMEDY REVIEWS

Josh Widdecombe, Tim Key, Tom Parry and Romesh Ranganathan

Inimitable compere and big name acts play it for laughs

Hilarity Charity Gala, Grand Theatre, Wolverhampton – by Mark Shipp

A HOST of big names took to the stage for this comedy fest in aid of Wolverhampton's Central Youth Theatre – and boy what a laugh we all had.

Now in its fourth year, the entertaining Daniel Kitson has become a fixture as compere. This year, Kitson was able to introduce Alun Cochrane, Josh Widdecombe – for second time at the gala – Suzi Ruffell, Tim Key and Romesh Ranganathan.

The auditorium was packed with more than 900 theatregoers and we had an ideal view from our seat in the box, although I did fear we would be 'picked on'. Instead, Kitson turned his attentions to others.

Cochrane, who described his material as environmentally friendly – he likes to 'reuse, reduce and recycle' his comedy, was just getting into his stride before his time was up, but Widdecombe and Ruffell in particular ensured an excellent first half.

After Key's unorthodox set, the brilliant Ranganathan, performing as a favour to his friend, Wolverhampton's Tom Parry, of Pappy's, who helped to organise the show, made sure everyone went home happy.

Cone JAM packed with fun activities

YOUNGSTERS can enjoy a range of activities and crafts with the Juniors at Museums (JAM) club at the Red House Glass Cone during the Whit Week holiday.

A free gnomes and fairies trail, where children can hunt for characters around the site, will be available every day from Saturday, May 27, to Sunday, June 3.

There are two bookable glass fusion sessions where families with children aged five and over can make their very own magical designs in glass for collection at a later date. These include glass gnomes on Tuesday and fairy toadstools on Thursday. Sessions at 10.30am, 11.30am, 1pm and 2pm.

There's also a fairy and gnome school on Wednesday where youngsters can take part in a range of crafts from 10am to 3pm. There's a chance to make a gift for dad at a glass fusing session on Saturday, June 3, from 11.30am. Visit www.dudley.gov.uk/see-and-do/museums for information.

Two brought before court for shouting racist abuse in shop

TWO members of far-right group Britain First – including a man from Dudley – yelled racist remarks at a shop owner in Shropshire.

Jason Stanyard, aged 37, from Bewdley, and Simon Humphreys, 50, from Kingswinford, were among a group of seven to target the Silicon Valley shop, in Telford, telling the Asian owner to 'return to his country' and take his 'sick book' with him – a reference to the Koran.

Telford Magistrates Court was told that staff at the business were left terrified after the group produced a video that highlighted an Islamic symbol on the shopfront, and claimed the store, in New Street, Wellington, was sporting the symbol of terrorist group Isis.

The footage was viewed nearly 400,000 times on Facebook. The pair also made completely false allegations about the shop boss and a customer being paedophiles during the incident on January 28.

Miss Abigall Hall, prosecuting, said: "Stanyard told them that this was a Christian country and they should go and practise Islam somewhere else. He also said all you paedophiles go back to your own country."

The court heard Humphreys told the victims: "You're coming into this country and grooming our girls. We're coming back on February 25 with a big march. You should be careful with your windows."

The court heard that both defendants had since left Britain First.

Mr John Macmillan, for Stanyard, of Shaw Hedge Road, said he had issues with heroin and was subject to a 12-week curfew for benefit fraud. Stanyard admitted two counts of racially and religious harassment and one count of using threatening words. The judge sentenced him to 12 weeks in jail suspended for 12 months. He must attend rehabilitation and his curfew was extended. He must also pay £100 compensation each to both victims and £115 victims' surcharge

Humphreys, of Vernier Avenue, admitted racially and religious harassment and using threatening words. He was sentenced to a 12-week community order fort 66 hours unpaid work, attend 20 rehabilitation days, pay £105 cost, £85 victims' surcharge and £200 compensation . Both must attend a diversity programme.

Metro work for local firms

DOZENS of West Midlands companies are being offered the chance to help build a series of multi-million pound Metro tram extensions over the coming decade.

Firms and contractors attending an event in Wolverhampton heard how the Midland Metro Alliance wants to see around 80 per cent of its suppliers to be from the West Midlands.

The Midland Metro Alliance, which is building six extensions on behalf of the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA), held a supplier day to give companies key information on the opportunities being generated by the new tram lines planned across the region.

Phil Hewitt, Metro programme director said: "Making a success of these infrastructure schemes will benefit a number of local firms which will help to safeguard jobs as well as generating new ones."

Chances to see waterwheel

What a wheel – Churchill Forge owner Pauline Hayward with daughter Bryony Hayward

VISITORS to an historic watermill were 'amazed by its raw authenticity' according to delighted volunteers who maintain the site.

Churchill Forge, at the village of Churchill between Stourbridge and Kidderminster, is one of only four water-powered hand-tool forges left in the UK.

Recently it opened to the public as part of National Mills Weekend, which features many sites not normally accessible, and opens again in June and July.

David Bache, part of the volunteer group which maintains the watermill, said there had been a great response.

"We get a great response from most of our visitors. People say it is a really outstanding experience and encourage us to keep all our work going," Mr Bache said.

"We have a lot of knowledgeable visitors and it is interesting to explain to people what would have gone on here. They are amazed by the raw authenticity while they are here."

The forge dates from around 1800 and has two working waterwheels, both from the 19th century, which measure 17 feet in diameter.

Today the forge looks as it did in the early 1900s, and is a miniature time capsule of hand-tool iron-working from the 20th century. During the festival both wheels were in operation for the public to see.

Churchill Forge produced metal tools and implements such as spades, shovels and ladles until the early 1970s.

The next open days at the site will be held on June 11 and July 9. Visit www.churchillforge.org.uk for more information.

Candidate helps with boost for food bank

IAN Austin has teamed up with Tesco and the Black Country Food Bank in a bid to boost food donations for people across the region.

Labour's candidate for Dudley North organised for two food bank collections at Tesco's Burnt Tree Island store to help feed local families who are struggling to put food on the table. Nationally, food banks are experiencing record demand, with 1.1 million emergency visits to food banks over the last year, up from 40,898 in 2010.

Mr Austin, who is defending a majority of 4,181 from the 2015 General Election, said: "I'm really pleased that Tesco have organised these extra collections after the last ones I helped organise were such a success. It's terrible that people are going hungry in the 21st century."

On June 8 Mr Austin faces competition from Les Jones (Conservative), Bill Etheridge (UKIP), Ben France (Lib Dem) and Andrew Nixon (Green).

Four flats plan at pub

A TOWN centre pub could be converted into flats, under ambitious plans lodged with Dudley Council.

An application has been submitted to transform the Malt Shovel Inn on Tower Street. The business is currently closed to the public.

An extension will be created on the ground floor to make room for a total of four flats, if the proposal gets the go-ahead.

The proposals will now be assessed by planning officers at the local authority.

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Start saving young to get most out of pension pot

THE drive to encourage workplace pension saving has put many people in charge of their future retirement income.

But how much should you be saving if you want to keep up the kind of lifestyle you're enjoying now?

While everyone's needs are different, consumer group Which? has undertaken research that sheds some light on the issue.

A survey of more than 1,500 retired couples found, on average, retired couples said they needed £18,000 a year to cover household essentials – such as food, utilities, transport and housing costs.

But for a slightly more comfortable lifestyle which allows for extras such as European holidays and leisure activities, they needed an annual income of £26,000.

The consumer group calculates that to generate an annual income of £26,000, a couple would need a defined contribution pot of £210,000 in today's money – alongside their current state pension entitlement.

Based on current retirement ages and state pension entitlements, to generate a £26,000 annual income Which? calculates couples starting saving from scratch need to be saving between them:

:: £131 a month if they start from aged 20
:: £198 a month from 30
:: £338 a month from 40
:: £633 a month from 50

Fancy a "luxurious" retirement? To achieve this, couples need to build a pot of £550,000, the research found.

To build such a pot, couples could need to save between them:

:: £283 a month if they start from aged 20
:: £424 a month from 30
:: £731 a month from 40
:: £1,657 a month from 50

The calculations make certain assumptions – and as such they are an indication of what people might need to save to achieve the sort of lifestyle they expect rather than a precise prescription.

While some of the figures may look a little daunting, they do show why it's a good idea to start the savings habit young – especially if you're hoping to spend your retirement sipping cocktails by a pool.

Encouragingly, the figures also show that even if you're starting to save later in life, it is still at least possible to build up a decent-sized pot.

Which? has a free online guide at which.co.uk/saveforretirement to help people plan their retirement saving. Free guidance is also available to those nearing retirement from the Government-backed Pension Wise service.

So how can you boost your chances of hitting your retirement income target?

According to Kate Smith, head of pensions at Aegon, pension saving should be seen as a habit, not a chore.

She says: "An annual income of £26,000 is achievable provided people start saving early. Savings from both partners also have the added bonus of an employer contribution via their workplace pension twice over.

"Realistically, few people will be in a long-term relationship from the age of 20, so it's important that they take personal responsibility and realise that the buck stops with them when it comes to pension savings.

"The key to building a good retirement pot lies in what you do in the early years to make pension saving a habit and not a chore."

TOP TIPS... TO REACH YOUR RETIREMENT SAVINGS TARGET

Here are some tips from Kate Smith of Aegon:

:: Don't delay. Start saving as early as possible. Make a plan, including all your pensions and savings.

:: Don't opt out of your workplace pension. Save enough to maximise your employer's pension contribution.

:: Work out how much you've saved in pensions and other savings you've targeted for retirement, such as Isas.

:: Get a state pension forecast online - gov.uk/check-state-pension. Make the most of online tools and calculators to work out how much you need to save.

:: Regularly review your plan, your pension and savings accounts. This is especially important for women returning to work from maternity leave and those whose children have reached school age, when nursery and childcare costs are no longer an expense.

:: Consider getting professional financial advice.

NEW CASH MACHINE APP

A cash machine locator app showing where all the Link network's 70,000 ATMs are in the UK has been launched. The app is accessible for visually impaired people and uses voiceover technology and enables people looking for their nearest ATM to filter the results to suit their needs.

A feast for sore eyes – we love our food, but making sure you don't cook too much for a meal is a good way of saving money and reducing waste

Cut down on food waste – and save yourself a packet

Report by Kate Whiting

IF you're guilty of binning leftovers or mouldy old veg from the bottom of the fridge you never got around to cooking, you're not alone.

According to research by Sainsbury's for its Waste Less, Save More campaign, an incredible seven million tonnes of food is wasted by UK households each year, of which 4.2 million tonnes is completely avoidable.

The good news is, by following some simple steps, we can all save money and help save the environment.

Sainsbury's discovered the main reasons for shoppers wasting food and have suggested the following top tips to avoid falling into these traps...

DON'T COOK TOO MUCH

The supermarket found that 41 per cent of people waste because they cook too much. Here's what to do...

:: **Portion control:** Stick to the recommended serving sizes listed on packaging. If you do over-cook, freeze the leftovers for another day.

:: **Give away, don't throw away**: If there is perfectly good food at risk of going in the bin, why not ask your neighbour if they'd like it, or donate it to a food bank? OLIO is a free app that connects neighbours to their local shops so that surplus food can be shared.

:: **Get creative:** Make delicious snacks and even full meals with leftovers you would ordinarily have thrown away. Creating everything from soups to tacos, burritos to biryanis, there are great ways to love your leftovers.

REMEMBER WHAT'S IN YOUR FRIDGE

A quarter of people throw away food because they forget they have it, according to Sainsbury's. So...

:: **Juice it:** Fruit and veg don't have to be thrown away just because they've gone a little soft. Throw fruit into a smoothie, and wilting veg into soups. Or combine both in tasty juices that are super healthy.

:: **Take a shelfie:** Simply photographing the contents of your fridge before you leave the house could stop you overbuying in-store.

BE BEST-BEFORE SAVVY

Sainsbury's found 19 per cent of us are confused by best-before and use-by dates. Here's a reminder...

:: **Use-by:** This date is about safety and the most important date to remember. Foods can be eaten (and most can be frozen) up until the 'use by' date, but not after.

:: **Best-before:** This refers to the quality and taste. The food is most likely safe to eat after this date but may not be at its best for flavour and texture. You can't beat looking, smelling and tasting for a reliable indicator of freshness.

More than half of the country's 7 million tonnes of food waste is avoidable

Lots of fruit and veg goes to waste if not used soon enough

Caddies get filled up with leftovers and unused food

START PLANNING MEALS

Only 29 per cent of people prepare a meal plan. Here's how to make one...

Dedicate 20 minutes of your week to checking what's in the fridge and cupboards, and creating a meal plan for the week ahead.

Choose meals that use similar ingredients to avoid waste. For example, make a chicken and vegetable soup on Monday and use the leftover veg in your shepherd's pie on Thursday.

MANAGE YOUR WASTE

According to Sainsbury's, 28 per cent of people wish they knew more about managing and cooking food.

:: **Use it all:** Often by-products of cooking can be turned into something delicious. For example, use bones from meat for stocks, and cheese rinds to flavour sauces.

:: **Bin responsibly:** If you have a garden, why not get a compost bag for any leftovers and peels, or check with your council if they offer food-waste disposal. Everything from egg shells to scraps left on your plate will then be disposed of in an environmentally-friendly fashion.

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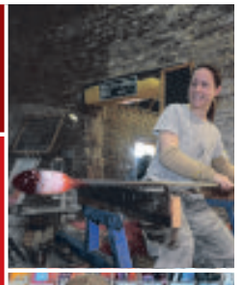

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I quick-stepped to Dirty Dancing role

It didn't take Carlie Milner long to agree to star in Dirty Dancing. The all-singing, all-dancing performer was delighted to play Penny Johnson.

And who can blame her. Dirty Dancing, which runs at Birmingham's New Alexandra Theatre from Monday to June 3, remains one of the nation's favourites.

Exploding with heart-pounding music, breathtaking emotion and sensationally sexy dancing, the film version has been seen by millions across the globe.

The worldwide smash hit tells the classic story of Baby and Johnny, two fiercely independent young spirits from different worlds, who come together in what will be the most challenging and triumphant summer of their lives. Featuring 35 hit songs, including Hungry Eyes, Hey Baby, Do You Love Me? and the heart stopping (I've Had) The Time Of My Life, it remains a true classic.

Carlie says: "It was one very quick chat with agent and we agreed that we'd do it. That was it."

She was formerly with Birmingham Royal Ballet, where she starred in Sleeping Beauty, and she also played in English National Ballet's Swan Lake, at the Royal Albert Hall. Stepping up as Penny Johnson has been a blessing and she's been on the road with it, off and on, since 2014.

"Yes, I started with it a few years ago. I was doing the old production and now we're back with a brand new interpretation of the show. I did the show for a year and a half and then I joined this production and we started rehearsals in June last year.

"Despite doing the show before, it's like doing a whole new show. I've really worked on the part and made it my own. It was a no brainer really."

The response from audiences has been ecstatic and Carlie thinks the musical has the perfect blend of comedy, drama and music to keep people entertained.

"It's a cult classic, it's got a huge following, as does the film, and that lends flavour to the theatre version. It appeals to more than just a theatre goer. You get people of all different ages going. It's lovely and there's the double nostalgia, with the show being set in the 60s but having lots of 80s music. It appeals to a wide audience and I think it will always be that way.

"The thing about Dirty Dancing is that it remains so current. I had the TV on last night and there was an advert and the first thing was the Dirty Dancing steps. It's always on TV. Every couple of months, you'll switch on and it's there. This production is a similar thing. I don't think it will go away. I know every show has to have a rest but then it comes back stronger.

"We had a new choreographer and a new director, new steps and I guess I had a break of six to eight months between shows. It's kind of nice coming back and seeing what else I can bring to it."

Carlie copes well with being away from home and describes herself as a good tourer. She's used to the routine of packing her suitcase each Sunday and hitting the road.

"It's a tough schedule but it's great. You just have to get on with it. You kind of accept that part of it. I'm on the move for a year and get home when I can.

"I like to think I'm pretty disciplined. Not to blow smoke up my own backside but you have to look after yourself and put work before play, if you're feeling tired. The more discipline you have the better. It's such a physical show and is so demanding."

She's looking forward to returning to Birmingham, where she was a student at the BRB. She learned a huge amount from the internationally-renowned troupe.

"BRB is a different world compared to musical theatre, certainly in terms of dance. You learn nothing but professionalism. I really value my time working with those companies at such a young age. It was great. It was invaluable. I feel like I've taken that into the other jobs and it was incredible to be in that.

"And to be in Swan Lake at the Albert Hall, a phenomenal theatre, surrounded by 40 other swans was insane. I'll never forget it. It was absolutely wonderful.

Spaghetti arms – Carlie plays Penny (far right) in Dirty Dancing

"I started off in ballet school and I wanted to do classical and that's what I did for the first few years. Like a lot of people who go through this, your options change through the years. Four years ago I decided to get involved in musical theatre. It was quite challenging after coming from a classical background.

Carlie fell into the role of Penny with ease, after understudying her character for a year-and-a-half. "It's something that I've always wanted to do, so to be able to call that role my own was great because I had really enjoyed it previously. In the old show I played Penny quite a lot as an understudy because unfortunately the main cast member suffered an injury.

"I'm quite lucky with the fact that Dirty Dancing is heavily dance based but I do really love all the acting as well. If I told myself four years ago that I would be playing Penny on a national tour I wouldn't have believed myself. This is the highlight of my career.

"It really is the film on stage. We throw a little bit extra in there and you have live singing and group singing parts which don't really feature in the film. It's a theatrical twist on the original."

Dirty Dancing – The Classic Story On Stage originally opened at London's Aldwych Theatre in 2006 with a record-breaking advance of £15 million, making it the fastest-ever selling show in West End theatre history. The production became the longest running show in the history of the Aldwych Theatre and played to over two million people during its triumphant five-year run.

It has become a worldwide phenomenon, with productions staged in the USA, Canada, Germany, Australia, the Netherlands, Sweden, South Africa, Hong Kong, Singapore and throughout Europe, consistently breaking box office records.

> *It's a tough schedule but it's great. You just have to get on with it*

Recent sell out tours include France, Germany and Australia.

The first ever UK tour of Dirty Dancing – The Classic Story On Stage, launched in 2011 and then returned to the West End in 2013 playing at the Piccadilly Theatre in London, prior to launching a second UK and Ireland tour.

The new production also features Lewis Griffiths, as Johnny Castle. Lewis has had a prolific career in musical theatre, most recently starring as Nick Massi on the UK tour of Jersey Boys. Other roles in UK tours include Ghost and Legally Blonde, and West End credits include Priscilla Queen of the Desert, Rent and Whistle Down the Wind.

It also features Katie Hartland, as Baby Houseman. Katie made her professional musical theatre debut carrying the watermelons as Baby Houseman, having graduated from the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama in 2015.

The show is set in the summer of 1963, and 17 year-old Frances 'Baby' Houseman is about to learn some major lessons in life as well as a thing or two about dancing. On holiday in New York's Catskill Mountains with her older sister and parents, she shows little interest in the resort activities, and instead discovers her own entertainment when she stumbles across an all-night dance party at the staff quarters.

Mesmerised by the raunchy dance moves and the pounding rhythms, Baby can't wait to be part of the scene, especially when she catches sight of Johnny Castle the resort dance instructor.

A show not to be missed.

● **For more entertainment news and reviews see The Ticket in your Express & Star every Friday.**

Rock 'n' roll musical Grease

Grease – the one that you want back on stage

Grease is the word at Birmingham Hippodrome where the latest tour of the much-loved rock 'n' roll musical arrives on Monday.

The show, which runs until June 3, is bringing a special guest for the cameo role of Teen Angel – Jimmy Osmond – who played that part in the West End production.

Tom Parker, formerly of boy band The Wanted, will make his musical theatre debut as Danny Zuko, the role made famous in the movie by the young John Travolta. Danielle Hope, who was Dorothy in The Wizard of Oz at the London Palladium after winning TV's Over The Rainbow, will step into Olivia Newton-John's high heel shoes as Sandy. Danielle was also recently seen in Hippodrome panto Dick Whittington.

The role of wisecracking Rizzo will be played by EastEnders and The Bill star Louisa Lytton, one of the youngest Strictly Come Dancing competitors in 2006.

Jim Jacobs and Warren Casey's musical, featuring such songs as You're The One That I Want, Summer Nights, Greased Lightnin' and Hopelessly Devoted To You, has been choreographed by Arlene Phillips and directed by David Gilmore, who was also at the helm for stage versions of Happy Days and Footloose.

A saucy feel-good romantic musical set in an American high school during the rock 'n' roll era, Grease is one of the most popular shows. This award-winning production opened in the West End in 1993, where it had a six year run, and has toured ever since.

Visit birminghamhippodrome.com or call 0844 338 5000. Grease will also visit Wolverhampton Grand Theatre from November 27 to December 2.

Dance delight from breaks to ballet

Hot on the heels of last weekend's B-Side Hip-Hop Festival in and around Birmingham Hippodrome, the UK's biggest festival of Hip Hop Dance, Breakin' Convention, comes to Birmingham bringing jaw-dropping performances from around the world and around the corner.

On Friday and Saturday, June 2 and 3, at Birmingham Repertory Theatre, Breakin' Convention includes performances from international hip hop dance crews including Soweto Skeleton Movers (from South Africa), Just Dance (South Korea) and all-female crew Tentacle Tribe (Canada).

In addition to the headline international acts, local crews, DJs, graffiti art and freestyle jams will transform The Rep's foyer making Breakin' Convention an experience rather than just a show.

Now in its 14th year, Breakin' Convention has firmly established itself as one of the major highlights on the British dance calendar. It is hosted and curated by UK hip hop pioneer Jonzi D, pictured, who said: "The Birmingham hip hop scene is one of the best in the UK, it's always been hype!"

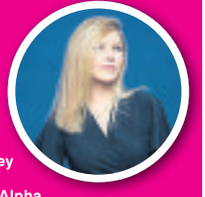
The festival includes the best from the West Midlands including Rhythm Junkiez Dance Company from Sutton Coldfield and Birmingham companies Jigsaw Collective, Broken Silence, Marshon Cadets, plus 2014 UDO world street dance champions Street Dance Academy.

The two-day festival is suitable for all ages and includes B-Totz for under 10. For full details see breakinconvention.com, tickets start from £10, call 0121 236 4455.

Tonight (Friday) and tomorrow the seductive world of Argentine tango is explored in Milonga at Birmingham Hippodrome, in which Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui brings his unique vision to tango with a cast of 17 performers.

Meanwhile, Northern Ballet bring their new production by Daniel de Andrade, based on the heartbreaking story of The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas, to Wolverhampton Grand Theatre on Tuesday and Wednesday plus, for younger audiences, Goldilocks on Wednesday afternoon.

Home inspiration for Saint Etienne



Saint Etienne emerged in 1990 with a gentle danceloor-orientated sound as Britpop exploded all around them. Charting with Join Our Club and You're in a Bad Way, the trio of singer Sarah Cracknell (pictured) with Bob Stanley and Pete Wiggs won fans with the albums Foxbase Alpha, So Tough and Tiger Bay. Five years on from their last album, they return with 16 new songs on Home Counties, released on June 2. They have a gig at Birmingham Town Hall on Sunday, June 4.

Punk and metal rule at Slam Dunk

It's Slam Dunk Saturday this weekend with the rock festival's line-up at Birmingham NEC now in excess of 60 bands.

The Slam Dunk Festival, which is also held at Leeds and Hatfield over the weekend, used to be held at Wolverhampton Civic Halls. It's an annual celebration of punk, ska, emo and metal music. Bands will be performing on eight stages.

Headliners include Enter Shikari – marking ten years since debut album Take To The Skies – plus Bowling for Soup, Neckdeep, Tonight Alive, Against Mel, Memphis May Fire and Nottingham's Area 11.

They will be performing alongside such favourites as Don Broco, Deaf Havana, Beartooth, Japan's Crossfaith, Reel Big Fish, We The Kings and Less Than Jake. See slamdunkmusic.com for the latest.

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SATURDAY'S TV MAY 27

CHOICE

Gwendolen Chatfield

Jane Austen: Behind Closed Doors (BBC2, 9pm)

Historian Lucy Worsley embarks on a road-trip across England to take in some of the places Jane Austen lived in and visited during her lifetime. She aims to demonstrate how Jane's personal experiences influenced the central themes of home and property in her novels, and makes use of detective-work to recreate some of the most important locations that no longer stand. She begins in Stoneleigh Abbey, Warwickshire, retracing a journey that marked one of the many times the Austens veered wildly between wealth and genteel poverty – mirroring the Dashwoods of Sense and Sensibility. Lucy also travels from Jane's birthplace in Steventon, Hampshire, to her brother's grand estate.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. **10.00** Saturday Kitchen Live. **11.30** Raymond Blanc: How to Cook Well. (R) **12.00** Football Focus. **1.00** BBC News; Weather. **1.15** Pointless Celebrities. (R) **2.00** The FA Cup Show. **4.00** BBC News. **4.10** Regional Programme. **4.15** MOTD Live: FA Cup Final Build-Up. **5.15** MOTD Live: FA Cup Final. Arsenal v Chelsea (Kick-off 5.30pm).

7.45 Doctor Who. The Doctor, Bill and Nardole find themselves in the middle of a war-zone, as Chinese, Russian and American forces stand poised to clash. At the centre of the field of battle is a 5,000-year-old pyramid, and while there are many problems with the situation presented, the Doctor is concerned with only one – there was no pyramid there yesterday. With the three opposing forces promising mutually assured destruction, and every clock in the world counting down to Earth's ruin, an offer of help arrives in the form of a message from an alien race. To avoid annihilation, humanity must willingly become slaves for their would-be saviours. Sci-fi drama, starring Peter Capaldi and Matt Lucas.

8.30 Who Dares Wins. Nick Knowles challenges two pairs of complete strangers to team up, and battle it out to list as much as they know about a given subject.

9.15 Mrs Brown's Boys. Agnes looks after a robotic baby that has been given to Dermot and Maria to help them prepare for their new arrival, and Cathy develops a crush on her psychology lecturer. (R)

9.45 BBC News; Weather.; National Lottery Update.

10.05 Clique. Holly remains suspicious about the clique, despite now being at its heart, and a climactic encounter during a night out tests friendships – both new and old – to breaking point.

10.50 Clique. Holly worst fears are confirmed, just as she is beginning to settle into her new life in Edinburgh, and tensions mount during a party to celebrate Georgia's achievements at Solasta.

11.35 MOTD: FA Cup Final Highlights. Arsenal v Chelsea. Action from the showpiece match at Wembley Stadium.

12.10 Film: Swingers. (1996) **1.45** Weather for the Week Ahead. **1.50** BBC News.

BBC2

6.15 Film: City Beneath the Sea. (1970) **7.45** Deborah Kerr: Talking Pictures. (R) **8.20 Film:** The Prisoner of Zenda. (1952) **10.00** Monty Halls' Great Hebridean Escape. (R) **11.00** Homes Under the Hammer. (R) **12.00** Great British Menu. (R) **12.30** Great British Menu. (R) **1.00** Great British Menu. (R) **1.30 Film:** Camelot. (1967) Musical, starring Richard Harris. **4.20** Flog It! (R) **5.00** Nature's Miniature Miracles: Natural World. Documentary telling how the world's smallest animals manage to survive, revealing how they have evolved extraordinary skills and achieved mindboggling feats. Hugh Dennis narrates. (R)

6.00 Golf: PGA Championship. Eilidh Barbour presents highlights of the third day of the European Tour's flagship event from Wentworth in Surrey. With commentary by Peter Alliss, Ken Brown and Andrew Cotter.

7.00 Mexico: Earth's Festival of Life. Exploring the wildlife, landscape and culture in three distinct areas of the country. (R)

8.00 RHS Chelsea Flower Show 2017. Coverage of the annual horticultural event, which takes place in the west London district.

9.00 Jane Austen: Behind Closed Doors. Lucy Worsley embarks on a road-trip across England to visit some of the many places that informed the central themes of home and property in Jane Austen's novels.

10.00 Film: Quartet. (2012) Three former opera singers prepare for their annual concert to mark Verdi's birthday and raise funds for their retirement home. However, this year, a famous diva has joined the group, and her history with the others threatens the performance. Comedy drama, directed by Dustin Hoffman and starring Maggie Smith, Billy Connolly, Tom Courtenay, Pauline Collins and Michael Gambon.

11.30 Versailles. William of Orange "tempts" the King to take the field against his Dutch army, so Queen Marie-Therese takes charge while Louis XIV is away at war; (R) Inside Versailles.

12.30 Film: Easy Money. (2010) A student, a fugitive and a Mob enforcer's lives overlap through their involvement in organised crime. Thriller, with Joel Kinnaman, Matias Varela and Dragomir Mrsic. **2.30** This Is BBC Two.

ITV

6.00 CITV: Bottom Knocker Street. **6.10** Bottom Knocker Street. (R) **6.25** Sooty. (R) **6.35** Signed Stories: Share a Story. (R) **6.40** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **6.50** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **7.00** Oddbods. (R) **7.05** Super 4. (R) **7.20** Marvel Avengers Assemble. (R) **7.45** Thunderbirds Are Go. (R) **8.10** Ben 10. **8.25** ITV News. **8.30** Weekend. **9.25** The Home Game. (R) **10.20** Judge Rinder. (R) **11.15** Tipping Point. (R) **12.20** ITV News; Weather. **12.30** Bigheads. (R) **1.30** The Chase. (R) **2.30 Film:** Mission: Impossible. (1996) Action thriller, starring Tom Cruise. **4.35** Catchphrase. (R) **5.20** Britain's Got More Talent.

6.15 Regional Programme; Weather.

6.25 ITV News; Weather.

6.45 Take Me Out. An account manager from Leeds, a housing executive from Belfast, a professional BMX rider from Portsmouth and an IT manager from Exeter try to impress 30 women and win a date.

8.00 Britain's Got Talent. The nationwide talent contest's audition phase draws to a close, as Ant and Den bring out one last batch of would-be stars to perform in front of judges Simon Cowell, Alesha Dixon, David Walliams and Amanda Holden. So far, Amanda, Alesha, Simon, and Ant and Dec have all made use of their Golden Buzzer privileges to send four acts directly through to the live semi-finals, with David remaining true to form and holding back on throwing his support behind any one performance until late in the audition process. Regardless, tonight will see the judges pick one last set of performers to bring the total of shortlisted acts to 35, before the elimination process gets under way with the first live semi-final on Monday.

9.20 The Keith and Paddy Picture Show. Keith Lemon and Paddy McGuinness present their version of Jaws, guest starring Stephen Tompkinson, Myleene Klass and Hank Osasuna.

9.50 Film: Jaws. (1975) A seaside town's police chief has to deal with a giant killer shark preying on tourists. Steven Spielberg's thriller, starring Roy Scheider.

10.50 ITV News; Weather.

11.05 Film: Jaws. (1975) Concluded.

12.25 Jackpot247. **3.00** Who's Doing the Dishes? (R) **3.50** ITV Nightscreen.

CHANNEL 4

6.05 Motor Sport: British Rally Championship. **6.30** Monaco Historic Grand Prix 2016. (R) **7.30** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **7.55** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.20** Frasier. (R) **8.55** Frasier. (R) **9.25** Frasier. (R) **9.55** Formula 1 Monaco Grand Prix Practice 3 Live. **11.25** Formula 1 Meets Claire Williams. **11.55** Formula 1 Monaco Grand Prix Qualifying Live. **2.30** World's Most Expensive Cars. **3.30** A Place in the Sun: Summer Sun. (R) **4.30** Big House, Little House. **5.35** Location, Location, Location. (R)

6.30 Channel 4 News.

7.00 The Restoration Man. George Clarke meets retired businessman Bruce Woodall, who 30 years ago started to restore a Georgian gazebo tower on top of Pembroke's medieval city walls – and has finally taken on the challenge of finishing the job. However, he discovers that since his architect drew up the plans, conservation laws have changed, threatening to shut down the project for good. George unravels this local landmark's 500-year-old secrets, finding its place in key chapters in English and Welsh history – but has the gazebo tower's story finally come to an end? (R)

8.00 Walks with My Dog. Ben Fogle takes his Labrador along the banks of the Thames, beginning in Marlow, while broadcaster Emma Kennedy and her maltipoo puppy visit the Lake District. Plus, Helen Skelton and her dog Barney embark on a voyage of discovery in Dumfries and Galloway, on Scotland so-called "secret coast".

9.00 Film: The World's End. (2013) A 40-year-old man who refuses to grow up drags four reluctant childhood friends back to their home town to recreate a pub crawl they attempted in their teens. As they work their way round the 12 local bars, they stumble on a threat to the entire human race. Sci-fi comedy, starring Simon Pegg and Nick Frost.

11.10 Film: Die Hard 2. (1990) A lone cop battles terrorists who have taken over an airport to force the release of a convicted drug baron. Action thriller sequel, starring Bruce Willis and Bonnie Bedelia.

1.25 Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares USA. (R) **2.20** The Last Leg. (R) **3.15** Hollyoaks. (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake! **10.10** The Fairly OddParents. (R) **10.45** Dogs Make You Laugh Out Loud. (R) **11.10** Police Interceptors: Dog Squad. (R) **12.05** Benefits Britain: Life on the Dole. (R) **1.05** Benefits Britain: Life on the Dole. (R) **2.05** Benefits Britain: Life on the Dole. (R) **3.05** The Nightmare Neighbour Next Door. (R) **4.00** Can't Pay? We'll Take It Away. (R) **5.00** Can't Pay? We'll Take It Away. (R)

6.00 Can't Pay? We'll Take It Away. In Staffordshire, the agents chase up a £3,000 deposit owed by a landlord to his tenant, and officers in Birmingham try to recover £25,000 from a nightclub owner for unpaid solicitor fees. Meanwhile, agents Max and Paul are in Surrey as they attempt to collect more than £3,000 owed to a garage after a customer disputed the repairs made to his van. (R)

7.00 Cricket on 5. England v South Africa. Action from the second one-dayer in the three-match series, held at the Ageas Bowl in Southampton, as the sides warmed up for the ICC Champions Trophy. With commentary from Geoffrey Boycott, Simon Hughes, Michael Vaughan, Graeme Smith and Mark Nicholas.

8.00 5 News Weekend.

8.05 NCIS: Los Angeles. Part one of two. The agents investigate when two men are killed at a gun shop, but soon discover one of their colleagues could be at risk.

8.55 NCIS. The team, alongside the FBI and MI6, continues the international manhunt for a disgraced British spy, while a colleague fights for their life in the ICU.

9.50 NCIS: Act of Vengeance. Feature-length episode. The team reels in the wake of the terrorist attack, but tries to avenge Kate's death by collecting as much information as possible on Ari before he does any more damage. Meanwhile, Gibbs learns one of his old flames has been named as the new NCIS director. (R)

11.40 Undercover Benefits Cheat. Paul Connolly goes undercover as a benefits claimant in order to expose fraudsters, beginning with those who claim housing support while subletting.

12.10 SuperCasino. **3.10 Film:** The Punisher. (1989) **4.40** Access. (R) **4.50** House Doctor. (R) **5.15** Wildlife SOS. (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Four

7.00 Saints and Sinners: Britain's Millennium of Monasteries **8.00** Nature's Great Events **9.00** Hinterland **10.30** Top of the Pops: 1983 **12.00** The Joy of the Bee Gees **1.00** Bee Gees at the BBC and Beyond **2.00** Boogie Fever: A TOTP2 Disco Special **3.30** Close

ITV2

12.10 Britain's Got More Talent **1.10** Take Me Out **2.25** Take Me Out – The Gossip **3.25** You've Been Framed! Gold Unleashed! **4.30 Film:** Space Chimps (2008) **5.30** FYI Daily **5.35 Film:** Space Chimps (2008) **6.10 Film:** Red Riding Hood (2011) **7.10** FYI Daily **7.15 Film:** Red Riding Hood (2011) **8.15** Scorpion **9.20** Britain's Got More Talent **10.20** Celebrity Juice **11.20** Family Guy **12.45** American Dad! **1.15 Film:** Bring It On (2000) **2.15** FYI Daily **2.20 Film:** Bring It On (2000) **3.00** Teleshopping

ITV3

11.50 Jane Eyre **2.05 Film:** Carry On Loving (1970) **3.15** FYI Daily **3.20 Film:** Carry On Loving (1970) **4.00** Lewis **6.00** Rosemary & Thyme **7.00** Midsomer Murders **9.00** Foyle's War **11.10** Law & Order: UK **2.05** ITV3 Nightscreen **2.30** Teleshopping

ITV4

11.00 The Classic Car Show **12.00** British Touring Car Championship Highlights **1.30** ITV Racing Live from Haydock. Coverage of today's race meetings at Haydock Park, Goodwood and York. **4.30** Pawn Stars **6.00** Storage Wars **7.00** The Sweeney **8.00** Better Late Than Never **9.00 Film:** Gascoigne (2015) **10.05** FYI Daily **10.10 Film:** Gascoigne (2015) **10.55** Premiership Rugby Union **11.55** River Monsters **1.00** Road Racing Series **2.00** Fifth Gear **2.50** ITV4 Nightscreen **3.00** Teleshopping

E4

12.00 The Goldbergs **2.30** Rude(ish) Tube Shorts **2.40** The Big Bang Theory **6.45 Film:** The Three Musketeers (2011) **9.00 Film:** The A-Team (2010) **11.25** Gogglebox **1.35** Rude Tube **2.35** Tattoo Fixers **3.25** Marvel's Agents of SHIELD

Film4

1.00 Casper (1995) **3.05** Napoleon Dynamite (2004) **4.55** Johnny English (2003) **6.35** Beautiful Creatures (2013) **9.00** The Day After Tomorrow (2004) A climatologist races across America to rescue his son as freak weather conditions cause devastation around the world. Disaster thriller, starring Jake Gyllenhaal. **11.25** Insidious (2010) **1.30** The Haunting in Connecticut (2009) **3.40** Close

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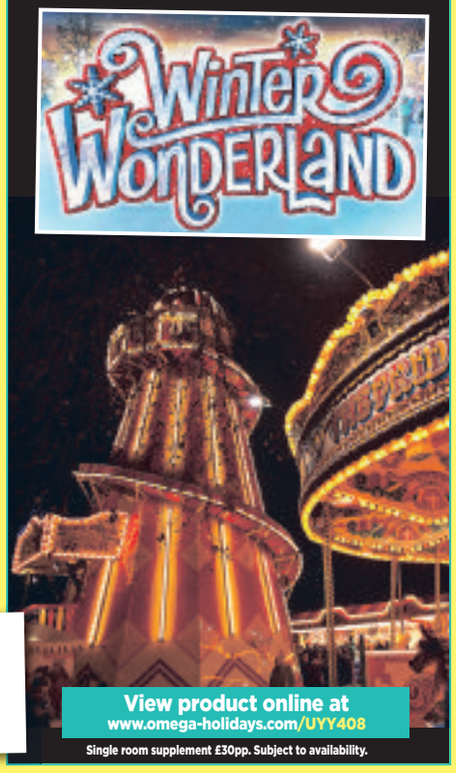

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SUNDAY'S TV MAY 28

CHOICE

Elisabeth Moss

The Handmaid's Tale (Channel 4, 9pm)
New series. Dystopian drama based on Margaret Atwood's novel about a future American theocracy, in which declining birth rates have led to a new social order, where the few remaining fertile women are kept as slaves to carry children for the regime's leaders. Elisabeth Moss stars as one of these women, who struggles to cope with her repressive existence and the resentment of her owner's wife. Joseph Fiennes, Yvonne Strahovski, Alexis Bledel, Madeline Brewer, Ann Dowd, O-T Fagbenle, Max Minghella, Samira Wiley, Amanda Brugel also star.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. **8.25** MOTD: FA Cup Final Highlights. (R) **9.00** The Andrew Marr Show. **10.00** The Big Questions. **11.00** Regional Programme. **12.15** Bargain Hunt. (R) **1.00** BBC News; Weather. **1.15** Homes Under the Hammer. (R) **2.15** Money for Nothing. (R) **3.00** Flog It! (R) **3.45** Shop Well for Less? (R) **4.45** Points of View. **5.00** Songs of Praise. **5.35** Escape to the Country. (R)

6.05 BBC News.

6.20 Regional Programme.

6.30 Countryfile. A round-up of reports on spring, including the return of tulips to Lincolnshire's farmlands, an influx of migrating jellyfish in Cornwall and a visit to Exeter's livestock market.

7.30 Antiques Roadshow. Fiona Bruce presents the show from an 18th-century cotton mill on the banks of the River Clyde, where a painting is a reminder of its owner's uncomfortable family secret.

8.30 Damilola, Our Loved Boy. In November 2000, 10-year-old schoolboy Damilola Taylor was attacked and fatally wounded in Peckham, south London, a death that shocked the nation. This feature-length drama reveals the personal stories behind the headlines, exploring Damilola's journey from Lagos to London, and showing how Richard and Gloria Taylor coped with their personal lives as well as the pressure of the media as they fought for justice for the killing of their son. Babou Ceesay, Wunmi Mosaku and Sammy Kamara star, with Robert Pugh. (R)

10.00 BBC News.

10.25 Regional Programme.

10.35 Room 101 – Extra Storage. Extended version of the comedy panel show in which Frank Skinner invites Claudia Winkleman, John Humphrys and Russell Kane to compete for the chance of banishing their pet hates. (R)

11.15 Murder in Successville. Comedy starring Tom Davis as DI Sleet, who enlists the help of a genuine famous sidekick to solve the latest high-profile murder. Last in the series.

11.45 The Women's Football Show. A look at the biggest issues in the women's game.

12.20 Film: Lucky Them. (2013) **1.50** Weather for the Week Ahead. **1.55** BBC News.

BBC2

6.15 Around the World in 80 Gardens. (R) **7.15** The Instant Gardener. (R) **8.00** The Beechgrove Garden. **8.30** Countryfile. (R) **9.30** Saturday Kitchen Best Bites. **11.00** Great British Menu. (R) **11.30** Great British Menu. (R) **12.00** Live Athletics: Great Manchester Run. Coverage of the 15th staging of the event. **2.30** Athletics: Diamond League Highlights. **3.30** Rowing: European Championships Highlights. **5.00** Athletics: Great Manchester Run Highlights.

6.00 Golf: PGA Championship. Eilidh Barbour presents highlights of the final day of the European Tour's flagship event from Wentworth in Surrey. With commentary by Peter Alliss, Ken Brown and Andrew Cotter.

7.00 Dragons' Den. Evan Davis presents the business ideas contest, as regular panelists Deborah Meaden, Peter Jones, Sarah Willingham, Touker Suleyman and Nick Jenkins consider the profit-making potential of wearable maps, interference-free guitar cables and keys for manhole covers. However, this last scheme comes from an entrepreneur who has previously come to the edge of bankruptcy. (R)

8.00 The Life Swap Adventure. New series. Volunteers trade places with people from other countries, hoping to gain a new outlook on life when they return. John, an overworked fire officer from Essex who worries he does not spend enough time with his children and grandchildren, swaps homes with a farmer from Malawi who envies Western technology and fears for his family's future.

9.00 Paul Hollywood's Big Continental Road Trip. New series. he Bake Off judge takes a series of road trips across different countries in Europe, driving some of the most famous cars made in each nation he visits. The first episode comes from Italy, where Paul takes a six-day journey with a different car for each day, beginning in Rome where he is joined by Strictly Come Dancing's Bruno Tonioli.

10.00 White Gold. (R)

10.30 Film: The Damned United. (2009) Fact-based drama.

12.00 Film: Easy Money II. (2012) **1.35** Sign Zone: Question Time. (R) **2.35** Holby City. (R) **3.35** This Is BBC Two.

ITV

6.00 CITV: Bottom Knocker Street. **6.10** Bottom Knocker Street. (R) **6.25** Sooty. (R) **6.35** Signed Stories: Share a Story. (R) **6.40** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **6.50** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **7.00** Oddbods. (R) **7.05** Super 4. (R) **7.20** Marvel Avengers Assemble. (R) **7.45** Thunderbirds Are Go. (R) **8.10** Ben 10. **8.25** ITV News. **8.30** Weekend. **9.25** Britain's Best Walks with Julia Bradbury. (R) **10.00** Peston on Sunday. **10.55** Judge Rinder. (R) **11.55** Judge Rinder. (R) **1.00** ITV News; Weather. **1.05** Tipping Point. (R) **2.05** The Chase. (R) **3.05** Britain's Got Talent. (R) **4.15 Film:** The Spy Who Loved Me. (1977) James Bond spy adventure, starring Roger Moore.

6.40 Regional Programme; Weather.

6.45 ITV News; Weather.

7.00 Bigheads. Jason Manford hosts the comedy game show in which the winning contestants from the past five episodes return to compete in a final series of bizarre physical challenges while wearing giant model heads of celebrities, with a convertible car as the grand prize. With commentary from Jenny Powell and Kriss Akabusi. Last in the series.

8.00 The Durrells. The family's maid goes into labour, so Leslie sends Larry to fetch Dr Petrides. However, he finds the doctor occupied, as he is in the middle of delivering his own wife's baby. Hugh has a proposition for a startled Leonora, which she promises to think about – but an altercation with Vasilia nearly ends in tragedy for them both. Donald attacks a rival suitor for Margo – who finds herself quite delighted by the thought of two men fighting over her – while Theo and Gerry make a discovery at the otters' den. Last in the series.

9.00 Grantchester. Sidney resolves to resign from the church so he can marry Amanda. However, a child abduction and Geordie's family problems make him see how much he is needed. Last in the series.

10.00 ITV News; Weather.

10.20 Peston on Sunday. Political magazine. (R)

11.20 Premiership Rugby Union.

12.15 Lethal Weapon. (R) **1.00** Jackpot247. **3.00** Motorsport UK. **3.50** ITV Nightscreen. **5.05** The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R)

CHANNEL 4

7.30 Frasier. (R) **8.00** Frasier. (R) **8.30** Frasier. (R) **9.00** Sunday Brunch. **12.00** Formula 1 Monaco Grand Prix Live Build-Up. Previewing the sixth round of the season. **12.35** Formula 1 Monaco Grand Prix Live. Coverage of the sixth round of the season (Start-time 1.00pm). **3.10** Formula 1 Monaco Grand Prix Live Reaction. A review of the sixth round of the season. **4.30** World's Most Expensive Cars. **5.30** George Clarke's Old House, New Home. (R)

6.30 Channel 4 News.

7.00 The Supervet. Noel Fitzpatrick and his team return to provide more cutting-edge animal care. The professor's first patient is labradoodle Mitzi, who has been hit by a car – and Noel's biggest concern is that she may have suffered nerve damage, leaving her owners fearing the worst. Options are limited for 10-month-old German pointer Hector, who is struggling to walk – he must undergo spinal surgery or face the prospect of being put to sleep, while a Leonberger with a cancerous leg undergoes an operation to remove the tumour. (R)

8.00 Cabins in the Wild with Dick Strawbridge. Dick Strawbridge and Will Hardie visit a cabin inspired by a national coal pit and a modernist design made entirely from slate. Plus, a look at an airship-inspired cabin in Sussex.

9.00 The Handmaid's Tale. New series. Dystopian drama based on Margaret Atwood's novel about a future American theocracy, starring Elisabeth Moss as a woman who is kept as a slave purely for breeding.

10.15 Gogglebox. Capturing the households' instant reactions to what they are watching on TV from the comfort of their own sofas. (R)

11.15 Micky Flanagan: Back in the Game. The comedian performs to his home crowd at London's Hackney Empire, regaling his audience with tales of middle age, marriage and a man's prerogative. (R)

12.50 Arnie's Greatest Ever Stunts. The actor examines the most spectacular stunts committed to film, ranking Hollywood set-pieces alongside standalone feats such as Felix Baumgartner's free fall to Earth. (R) **2.15 Film:** Blue Ruin. (2014) **3.50** Location, Location, Location. (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake!: Milkshake! Monkey. **6.05** Mr Men. (R) **6.15** Peppa Pig. (R) **6.20** Peppa Pig. (R) **6.25** Wissper. (R) **6.35** Paw Patrol. (R) **6.45** Bob the Builder. (R) **7.00** Fireman Sam. (R) **7.10** Olly the Little White Van. (R) **7.15** Olly the Little White Van. (R) **7.20** Paw Patrol. **7.45** Blaze and the Monster Machines. (R) **8.05** Noddy: Toyland Detective. (R) **8.25** Wissper. (R) **8.35** Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom. (R) **8.50** Shimmer and Shine. (R) **9.05** Little Princess. (R) **9.20** Peppa Pig. (R) **9.30** Peppa Pig. (R) **9.40** Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom. (R) **9.50** The Fairly OddParents. (R) **10.25** The Gadget Show. (R) **11.20** Police Interceptors. (R) **12.20** Police Interceptors. (R) **1.15** Police Interceptors: Under Attack. (R) **2.15 Film:** Open Season 3. (2010) Animated adventure, with the voice of Matthew J Munn. **3.45 Film:** Pudsey the Dog: The Movie. (2014) Family comedy, starring Jessica Hynes. **5.30** Most Shocking Talent Show Moments. (R)

7.55 5 News Weekend.

8.00 Holidays Make You Laugh Out Loud. Iain Lee narrates a compilation of internet videos involving holidays, including a daily sprint for the sunbeds and a man who thought he was filming Las Vegas but actually had the camera pointed at himself. Featuring contributions from comedians Dave Spikey, Zoe Lyons and David Mills.

9.00 When Kids TV Goes Horribly Wrong. Andi Peters narrates a compilation of classic children's TV mishaps, featuring contributions from presenters including Sarah Greene, Sally James, Pat Sharp, Gaz Top, Toby Anstis, as well as John Leeson, the actor who played Rainbow's giant teddy bear Bungle, and who remembers his terrifying original costume. Plus, a campfire burning out of control in the Blue Peter studio and some inappropriate adverts.

12.00 Football on 5: The Play-offs. **12.25** Dumb Drivers: Caught in the Act. Footage of motorists and motorcyclists getting into all sorts of scrapes. (R) **1.15** SuperCasino. Live interactive gaming. **3.10** Top 20 Funniest. A countdown of the funniest video clips in America. (R) **3.55** Access. (R) **4.00** World's Most Pampered Pets. Documentary about people who spoil their pets. (R) **4.50** House Doctor. (R) **5.15** Wildlife SOS. (R) **5.40** Angels of Jarm. (R) **5.50** Roary the Racing Car. (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Four
7.00 Perfect Pianists at the BBC **8.00** Radio 1's Big Weekend: Highlights **9.10** Kings of Leon Live at Radio 1's Big Weekend **10.00** Arena: American Epic **11.00** Blues at the BBC **12.00** The Man Who Brought the Blues to Britain: Big Bill Broonzy **1.00** Jago: A Life Underwater **1.50** Nature's Great Events **2.50** Engineering Giants: Jumbo Jet Strip-Down **3.50** Close

ITV2
11.50 Take Me Out **1.05 Film:** Richie Rich (1994) **2.10** FYI Daily **2.15 Film:** Richie Rich (1994) **2.55 Film:** Cats & Dogs: The Revenge of Kitty Galore (2010) **3.55** FYI Daily **4.00 Film:** Cats & Dogs: The Revenge of Kitty Galore (2010) **4.40** Britain's Got Talent **6.00** Britain's Got More Talent **7.00 Film:** Despicable Me (2010) **8.00** FYI Daily **8.05 Film:** Despicable Me (2010) **9.00** Take Me Out – The Gossip **10.00** Family Guy **11.30** American Dad! **12.30** The Cleveland Show **1.25** Through the Keyhole **2.20** Teleshopping **5.50** ITV2 Nightscreen

ITV3
12.15 Film: Carry On Loving (1970) **1.15** FYI Daily **1.20 Film:** Carry On Loving (1970) **2.10 Film:** Columbo: The Most Crucial Game (1972) **3.45** Foyle's War **6.00** Midsomer Murders **8.00** Royal Stories **9.00** Kate: The Making of a Modern Queen **10.05** Law & Order: UK **12.05** Wire in the Blood **3.25** May the Best House Win **5.05** In Loving Memory **5.30** ITV3 Nightscreen

ITV4
9.00 Film: Last Man Standing (1996) **10.00** FYI Daily **10.05 Film:** Last Man Standing (1996) **11.05 Film:** United 93 (2006) **12.05** FYI Daily **12.10 Film:** United 93 (2006) **1.10** Premiership Rugby Union **2.15** Tommy Cooper **2.50** ITV4 Nightscreen **3.00** Teleshopping

E4
1.30 Brooklyn Nine-Nine **2.00** New Girl **2.30** Rude(ish) Tube Shorts **2.50 Film:** A Turtle's Tale: Sammy's Adventures (2010) **4.30 Film:** Mr Popper's Penguins (2011) **6.30** The Big Bang Theory **9.00** Marvel's Agents of SHIELD **10.00** Rude Tube **11.00** 8 Out of 10 Cats **11.55** Tattoo Fixers **2.00** Marvel's Agents of SHIELD **2.50** Rude Tube **3.40** Hollyoaks

Film4
11.00 Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Rodrick Rules (2011) **1.00** Thunderbirds Are Go! (1966) **2.55** The Dark Crystal (1982) **4.40** Small Soldiers (1998) **6.45** The Secret Life of Walter Mitty (2013) **9.00** 2 Guns (2013) **11.10** Odd Thomas (2013) **1.00** A Girl at My Door (2014) **3.30** Close

PICK OF THE WEEK

FILM CHOICES

MONDAY
Song for Marion, BBC2, 10.30pm
A grouchy old man has always been dismissive of his wife's role in the unconventional local choir. When she is diagnosed with a terminal illness and is no longer able to sing, he reluctantly agrees to take her place, a decision that dramatically changes his life and helps him through the hard times to come. Comedy drama, with Terence Stamp, Gemma Arterton, Vanessa Redgrave and Christopher Eccleston. (2012)

TUESDAY
Diana, Channel 5, 11.05pm
Fact-based drama following the Princess of Wales in the last two years of her life. Under constant media scrutiny, she finds a new public role for herself as a patron of humanitarian causes, while secretly conducting a passionate affair with a Pakistani heart surgeon. Starring Naomi Watts and Naveen Andrews. (2013)

Sliding Doors, Friday, BBC1, 11.25pm

WEDNESDAY
Saved from Sorrow: Mysterious Grace, Channel 5, 3.15pm
A retired police officer, despondent over the deaths of his family, meets a mysterious woman who through her personal stories gives him a reason to rethink what is most important to him. Drama, starring Joey Lawrence, Robin Riker, Muse Watson and Catalina Rodriguez. (2016)

THURSDAY
Alone in the Wild: Deadly Survival, Channel 5, 3.15pm
After a plane crash leaves them stranded in the Canadian wilderness, young siblings Hannah and Zach battle all that nature has to throw at them. Alongside trusty dog Chinook, the duo face bears, wolves and a raging wildfire in their bid to find safety. Family drama, starring Natasha Henstridge. (2013)

FRIDAY
Sliding Doors, BBC1, 11.25pm
A London woman's entire future hinges on a seemingly minor but pivotal moment. Comedy drama, presenting two versions of a character's life, starring Gwyneth Paltrow and John Hannah. (1998)

Feeling the strain of a life in the media spotlight

Decades before Donald Trump blurred the lines between politics and pop culture, the Kennedys were America's obsession.

They have everything that the tabloids and gossip writers could want in a family – politics, extraordinary wealth and copious scandals, which makes it easy to see why people continue to crave as much information about them as they can get their hands on.

Of course, there have been countless movies and TV series made about their lives over the years, including, notably, 2016's biographical film Jackie, which earned Natalie Portman an Oscar nomination for Best Actress.

However, not all depictions of the clan have been as well received.

Back in 2011, TV mini-series The Kennedys was slammed even before it aired for taking a sensationalist approach to the story of JFK (Greg Kinnear), his wife Jackie (Katie Holmes), brother Robert (Barry Pepper) and patriarch Joseph (Tom Wilkinson).

Nevertheless, it was a ratings success for broadcaster ReelzChannel, and some critics even came round – Pepper won an Emmy for his performance.

Tonight, the show's sequel The Kennedys: Decline and Fall is premiered on UK TV.

The drama (which was called The Kennedys – After Camelot in the US) is based on a book by J Randy Taraborrelli and picks up in the wake of Bobby's 1968 assassination and goes all the way through to 1994.

Jackie (again played by Holmes, who also directed part of it) is again in mourning, and sniping breaks out between her and the newly widowed Ethel (Kristin Booth).

Robert's brother Ted (the almost unrecognisable Matthew Perry, complete with fake ears, a fake nose and wavy-haired wig) is seen delivering part of the famous eulogy for Bobby.

Indeed, much of the drama focuses on Ted and revisits the awful death of a young woman named Mary Jo Kopechne, in 1969.

Ted, then a US Senator for Massachusetts, had been at a party with Kopechne and others on the island of Chappaquiddick, on Martha's Vineyard.

Kennedy was behind the wheel in his car with Kopechne when he accidentally drove off a bridge into a pond. Ted escaped, but Kopechne stayed trapped inside the car.

His conduct after the incident, reports of his drinking, women-chasing and controversy surrounding Kopechne's death essentially doomed Kennedy's chances of becoming President himself.

Throughout the drama, we see Ted struggling with the pressure to live up to his brothers' legacies and with his own personal inadequacies.

The second storyline in Decline and Fall has Jackie questioning her tenuous position within the Kennedy family, while also being wooed by and wedding Greek shipping magnate Aristotle Onassis (Alexander Siddig).

The Kennedys: Decline and Fall, Monday, Channel 5, 9pm

BEST OF THE REST

MONDAY
May v Corbyn Live: The Battle for Number 10
Channel 4, 8.30pm
A lot has been made about Theresa May's decision not to participate in a live debate with Jeremy Corbyn and the other leaders of the UK's main political parties ahead of next week's General Election. However, the Prime Minister is not in for an easy ride tonight. In this show, broadcast simultaneously on Channel 4 and Sky News, May and Corbyn will both face questions from the audience via Sky News Political Editor Faisal Islam. Then, in between each Q&A segment, both of the leaders will be interviewed by former Newsnight presenter Jeremy Paxman. If you miss tonight's show, May and Corbyn will be seen on our screens again in a BBC Question Time Special, presented by David Dimbleby, on Friday.

TUESDAY
Grayson Perry: Divided Britain
Channel 4, 9pm
You can't beat a Grayson Perry documentary - and that was something nobody thought they would ever hear when he began making programmes for Channel 4. After all, he was a potter, not a film-maker, but he's done the broadcaster proud, devising numerous enthralling shows on a range of subjects – and this promises to be just as good as its predecessors. In January, he asked viewers to contribute to the making of two pots by asking them their thoughts on Brexit. These were submitted via Twitter, and now we're getting an opportunity to find out how Perry has used them. Not that he's been keeping it a secret - his social media followers have been treated to sneak previews over the weeks, but now we'll be seeing them for the first time in all their glory.

WEDNESDAY
Fargo
Channel 4, 10pm
The Coen brothers couldn't possibly have imagined that their Oscar-nominated drama set in the snowy wastes of Minnesota would go on to spawn three TV series, but thank goodness it has because the small screen version of Fargo has been a real treat. Each run features new stories and characters, and the latest stars Ewan McGregor in the dual role of brothers Ray and Emmit Stussy. The latter is the state's Parking Lot King, a slick, self-made property mogul and family man; Ray, meanwhile, is a different kettle of fish altogether. Pot-bellied and balding, he's a parole officer with a chip on his shoulder about the hand in life he's been dealt and blames his sibling for all his problems. There is no love lost between the brothers, and their rivalry is about to wreak havoc in their small town.

Frank Skinner on Muhammad Ali, Thursday, BBC1, 9pm

THURSDAY
Frank Skinner on Muhammad Ali
BBC1, 9pm
Last year, millions of fans around the world mourned the passing of Muhammad Ali whose fame and charisma transcended boxing. One of those who grieved him was comedian Frank Skinner, who now gets a chance to pay tribute to his idol with this documentary. Skinner travels across the UK and the US to visit some of the key locations and people in Ali's life, from the next-door neighbour from Louisville, Kentucky, who witnessed the teenager boxer's dedication to his craft, to a bare-knuckle fighter on an Oxfordshire council estate who became one of his dearest friends. Along the way, Skinner learns more about some of the lesser known chapters in Ali's story and finds out just why he became an icon of the civil rights movement and arguably the greatest sporting hero of the 20th-century.

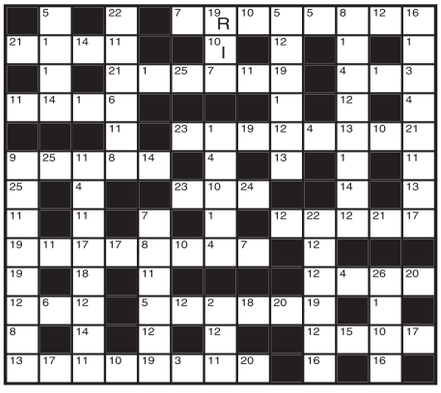
FRIDAY
Question Time Leaders' Special
BBC1, 8.30pm
With less than a week to go to the General Election, time is running out for the country's politicians to get their points and policies across to the British people. In this programme, which could turn out to be one of the defining moments of the campaign, Theresa May and Jeremy Corbyn will feature on the same prime-time edition of Question Time in York. The Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition won't be on screen at the same time, but they will be quizzed by the same audience – and David Dimbleby – consecutively. The veteran host will also be in Edinburgh on Sunday, where he will be chairing a second special with Liberal Democrat Tim Farron and the SNP's Nicola Sturgeon.

BRAIN GYM

No.431

Codeword

Each number in the grid represents a different letter of the alphabet and every letter of the alphabet is used. Use the given letter(s) to the right of the main grid to start you off.



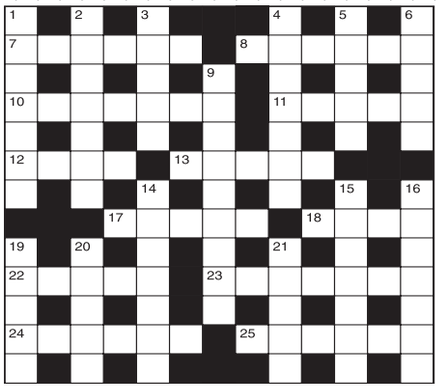
1	14
2	15
3	16
4	17
5	18
6	19 R
7	20
8	21
9	22
10 I	23
11	24
12	25
13	26

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
K	Z	P	E	W	L	F	V	H	I	J	A	Q
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
M	C	U	S	Y	D	O	T	N	G	B	R	X

Double Crossword

Choose either quick or cryptic clues - both fit the same grid.



Cryptic Clues:

Across

7. Freedom from anxiety shown by some cartographers (6)
8. Give the fellow a blend of tea (6)
10. I've lost various flowers (7)
11. Particular positions that will produce spectacles, we hear (5)
12. This tide occurs at dusk (4)
13. Footwear establishing a record in the Civil Service! (5)
17. A steel fastener put back for the creeper (5)
18 & 20Dn. Suffer twinges but work with great care (4,5)
22. Father put back the top card quickly (5)
23. Came out in spots (7)
24. Used by the artist when camping (6)
25. Dislodged from a high perch, one hears (6)

Down

1. Foresight? (7)
2. Everything still outstanding is not banned (7)
3. Revolutionary film about the capital of Bulgaria (5)
4. So Grace redesigned the bouquet (7)
5. See 14 Down
6. Lets a minimum change take place (5)
9. Needs a pal for a seaside walk (9)
14 & 5Dn. Generous celebration for political group (7,5)
15. Whaling equipment - an instrument with a ring on (7)
16 & 21Dn. Chief illumination for pre-eminent personage (7,5)
19. It's not plain imagination (5)
20. See 18 Across
21. See 16 Down

Quick Clues:

Across

7. Gateway (6)
8. Roar (6)
10. To storm (7)
11. Domestic task (5)
12. Too (4)
13. Blithe (5)
17. Angry (5)
18. Measure (4)
22. Water lily (5)
23. Upshot (7)
24. Coincide (6)
25. Brandy (6)

Down

1. Ascetic (7)
2. Assure (7)
3. Mortal (5)
4. Quicksilver (7)
5. Blossom (5)
6. Proprietor (5)
9. Desertion (9)
14. Off-hand (7)
15. Tell (7)
16. Protection (7)
19. Remiss (5)
20. Expiate (5)
21. Bench (5)

Sudoku

4			9	6	3			5
	3		7		8		1	
	9				4			
		2		3		7		
9			5	1				8
		6		7		2	3	
7								
	8		6		7		4	
5			2	4	1			7

Fill in the grid above so that every column, every row and each of the 3x3 boxes contains all the digits from 1 to 9.

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS >

5	9	7	8	3	2	4	6	1
2	1	3	6	4	9	5	7	8
6	8	4	7	1	5	9	3	2
9	6	1	4	8	3	2	5	7
7	3	5	2	9	6	8	1	4
8	4	2	1	5	7	3	9	6
3	2	8	9	6	1	7	4	5
1	7	9	5	2	4	6	8	3
4	5	6	3	7	8	1	2	9

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS:
CRYPTIC - Across: 1 Stall; 4 Ash pits; 8 Inmates; 9 Tripe; 10 Mite; 11 Relation; 13 Dolt; 14 Deal; 16 Gestured; 17 Idle; 20 Sward; 21 Get into; 22 Set free; 23 Great. Down: 1 Seismologists; 2 Admit; 3 Lute; 4 Answer; 5 Hot water; 6 Initial; 7 Stern-foremost; 12 Flounder; 13 Distant; 15 Beagle; 18 Dense; 19 Stag.
QUICK - Across: 1 Decor; 4 Painter; 8 Flatter; 9 Charm; 10 Ewer; 11 Horseman; 13 Earn; 14 Foul; 16 Transfer; 17 Glee; 20 Agate; 21 Titanic; 22 Erector; 23 Press.
Down: 1 Differentiate; 2 Chase; 3 Rota; 4 Parson; 5 Incision; 6 Trammel; 7 Reminiscences; 12 Prospect; 13 Emanate; 15 Letter; 18 Lance; 19 Stop.

Quiz

1. Of which African country is Brazzaville the capital?
2. Which Greek letter represents the ratio of the circumference of a circle to its diameter?
3. Which Norwegian composer had the middle name Hagerup?
4. With which sport is the English Leander Club associated?
5. Which French author wrote The Human Comedy series of novels?
6. What type of animal is a porcupine?
7. Which poet laureate wrote The Fair Penitent?
8. Membership of which body allows MPs to be called Right Honourable?
9. What nationality was Ivor Novello?
10. Who directed the controversial film Natural Born Killers?

Last week's solutions:

Quiz: 1 Raven; 2 Darwin; 3 Tin; 4 Thistle; 5 Grozny; 6 11 Downing Street; 7 The Brown Bomber; 8 Muslin; 9 Northwest Passage; 10 Tony award.

Niner: TINDERBOX

Niner

Each number from 1 to 9 represents a different letter. Solve the clues and insert the letters in the appropriate squares to discover a word which uses all nine letters.

639972 gives a country,
7681245 gives a second country,
74572 gives a third country.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

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SONGS FROM THE SHOWS 2-3PM*
performed by members of Stourbridge Operatic Company, a musical tribute to the late Margaret Morgan, *Ashwood's much-loved volunteer and long-serving member of Stourbridge Operatic*
All proceeds donated to The Beacon Centre
For further info please call us or visit our website
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Dino diner is a roaring success

When our daughter arrived on this Earth, the small print said she'd be into dinosaurs.

That's what we were led to believe when she was handed to us at the hospital. Cradling our little girl, my other half hummed the theme tune to Jurassic Park into her ear, in the hope that his lifelong love affair with the Steven Spielberg blockbuster would be passed down to her subconsciously.

However, 15 months on, and Edie has yet to spark an interest in pre-historic beasts. And her lack of enthusiasm was never more evident as we walked around West Midland Safari Park's excellent Land of the Living Dinosaurs. So, in a last ditch attempt to spark some pre-historic magic, we headed over to the Dino Diner for some lunch because if anything's going to inspire our kid, it's food.

The entrance to the Dino Diner

Sandwich filler – served with salad and crisps

The diner interior at West Midland Safari Park

TROPICAL

Entering through a giant bone carcass, it has a pre-historic cave-like interior with moody lighting and tropical plants. The only thing missing was the Jurassic Park soundtrack. Or even some T-Rex. Get It On, I say.

Welcomed by a sunny member of staff in safari-style gear, we were shown to a table and invited to order food and drinks at the counter. After a bit of a false start due to a fire alarm and the restaurant being evacuated, we reconvened to decide on our food choices.

The menu makes an amusing read. Carnivores are well-catered for; there's Rex's Lunch – a lamb shank in red wine sauce with mashed potatoes – or a Predator Platter comprising half a chicken, rack of ribs and sides.

Herbivores can tuck into the Bronto Balti – a vegan sweet potato balti, while skinniovres (dieters) can opt for the Raptor Salad of piri piri chicken, mixed leaves, sweet potato and quinoa. Litte people have loads of choice too – there's not a Bernard Matthews breaded turkey dinosaur in sight, as options include sausage, mash and peas, and pasta bolognese. There's please-all side orders too, like onion rings and cheesy dough balls.

In the interest of giving the menu a fair run we ordered a raft of food including the barbecue pulled pork-loaded nachos, the raptor salad and volcanic skillet fajita. Oh, and a diddy dino sweet potato balti with rice for the little one on the basis that we fancied trying it too. Our meals arrived promptly and looked freshly-cooked and appealing. The bill came to just over £36. Most disappointing in terms of value for money was the kid's sweet potato balti which, at £6, came in a meagre portion of brownish mush on top of plain white rice. Edie was as interested in it as she was the dinosaur trail.

She was rather enamoured by the barbecue pulled pork-topped nachos, though. In fact, it proved a hit with us all; we attacked it like a pack of predatory pterodactyl at a buffalo meat buffet.

The fajitas were well presented with a separate skillet of sizzling chicken breast, mixed peppers and onions in a sauce as spiky as a stegosaurus's spine, and a pile of soft tortilla wraps. The raptor salad provided some much-needed crunch, packed with a few unusual ingredients such as sugar snap peas and slices of sweet red pepper. Two skewers of chicken thigh meat drizzled in a sweet chilli sauce were moist and pleasantly charred and accompanied by red pepper hummus and tortilla wrap. We polished off most of the food despite ordering far too much.

Our little girl might have been unimpressed with the 65- million-year-old dinosaurs but the food was a roaring success.

By Emily Bridgewater

PROPERTY

YOUR WEEKLY GUIDE TO HOME BUYING AND LETTING

Traditional semi is spacious and has been extended

An incredibly deceptively spacious and substantially extended traditional semi-detached property, 25 Dudley Road, Kingswinford, is set back behind a very large block paved driveway.

Also having a good-sized and beautifully laid out private rear garden with a large workshop/store and close to excellent schools, a park and the village, it is for sale through Taylors at £210,000.

With double glazing and gas central heating, its generous layout includes an entrance porch, a reception hall, a large full depth sitting room, a ground floor shower room, and a 'stunning' luxury re-fitted breakfast kitchen with appliances.

To the first floor there are three large bedrooms. with bedroom three having been substantially extended, and a modern bathroom.

Dudley Road has easy access into the centre of Kingswinford, with its friendly village shops and restaurants etc.

In more detail the porch has tiled flooring and the reception hall has light wood-style flooring, stairs off and under stairs storage. The impressive full depth sitting room is a large reception room which has a walk-in bay window to the front and French doors leading out to the rear patio, and a 'living flame' gas fire with feature fireplace surround.

Having been re-fitted, the stunning family dining kitchen is beautifully appointed with a superb range of soft closing units with worktops, plumbing for a dishwasher, a recess for a range style cooker, a Zanussi fridge, an extra large integrated freezer, a tall pull-out 'slimline' larder unit and wall units with an integrated microwave. The units opposite include plumbing for washing machine.

A shower room completes the ground floor.

Off the first floor landing, bedroom one has a walk-in bay window overlooking the frontage and the two remaining bedrooms overlook the rear. The bathroom has a classic white suite with chrome colour fittings including the panelled bath with electric shower above, push button flush WC and full height tiling to the walls. Ladders lead to the decorated loft with two Velux windows and carpeting.

KINGSWINFORD £210,000

TO VIEW THIS PROPERTY

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- Traditional semi-detached
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Two-bedroomed house is new to the market

DUDLEY
£94,950

New to the property market, this deceptively spacious two-bedroomed mid terrace property in New Road, Dudley, includes two large reception rooms plus a breakfast room/utility.

It is for sale through Hicks Hadley at £94,950.

As well as the two large reception rooms and breakfast room/utility area, the home's accommodation includes a good-sized fitted kitchen with appliances, a rear lobby, two well-proportioned bedrooms and a large bathroom with separate shower cubicle to the first floor.

The property has a courtyard garden, a cellar, gas central heating and double glazing. This sale is expected to generate a lot of interest.

Contact Hicks Hadley on 0121 585 6667.

Four-bedroom extended family home enjoys a lovely setting

WOLLASTON
£299,950 <<<

An extended four-bedroomed detached family home with well proportioned bedrooms in Tyrol Close Wollaston, Stourbridge, is for sale through Taylors at £299,950.

With two reception rooms it lies in a great location for Wollaston village and schools. It is in a quiet residential close off High Park Avenue. It is in a lovely setting.

With gas central heating and double glazing this four bedroom, extended, detached family home accommodation briefly comprising an entrance porch, entrance hall, a sitting room, a separate extended dining room, a kitchen, four bedrooms and a modern white bathroom.

Outside, is a fore garden, drive to the garage and an enclosed rear garden.

Contact Taylors on 01384 395555 or visit www.taylors-estateagents.co.uk

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Guide Price £425,000-£475,000

Sutton Park Road Kidderminster DY11 6LD

Guide Price £130,000-£140,000

A rare opportunity to purchase a three bedroom semi-detached family home sitting on a good plot in a highly sought after location on the Bewdley side of Kidderminster. Entrance Porch. Reception Hall. Lounge. Dining Room. Kitchen. Utility. Downstairs w.c. Three Bedrooms. Bathroom. Garage. Fore and rear Gardens. Ample parking for a number of vehicles. Potential for side/rear extension subject to normal planning permissions. EPC D
KIDDERMINSTER OFFICE 01562 822244

Windermere Way Stourport DY13 8JR

Guide Price £170,000-£190,000

Built in the early 1960's by eminent building Firm Mucklows, and now to be sold for the very first time since new in order to close an Estate, commanding a gorgeous open vista across Burlish Park Golf Club, also taking in the Clent Hills! - a larger style 3-bedroom link detached house with good sized level gardens therefore lending ideal scope for imaginative extension - subject to requisite Consents - to further captivate the views! EPC D
EPC TBC STOURPORT OFFICE 01299 822060

New House Button Oak Bewdley DY12 3AL

Guide Price £150,000-£200,000

A character non-listed brick/stone built double fronted semi-detached country cottage standing on approx. 0.22 of an acre in a pretty much original and now run-down state but with BIG potential. The property backs directly onto the ancient Wyre Forest giving privacy and shelter whilst also commands an exceptionally broad plot offering some 40ft of right hand side amenity thereby lending all kinds of possibilities for imaginative extension subject to requisite consents! Here is the perfect chance for your very own "grand design" in a lovely rural setting EPC G STOURPORT OFFICE 01299 822060

Farfield Kidderminster DY10 1UQ

Guide Price £85,000-£95,000

A rare and superb opportunity to purchase a larger style end of terraced three bedroom property situated in a sought after and most convenient location just a few minutes walk from Kidderminster railway station and half a mile distant from the town centre itself. Lounge. Inner Hall. Cellar. Dining Room. Kitchen. Two Bedrooms and Bathroom to first floor. Attic Bedroom. Outside w.c. Fore and rear Gardens. EPC E
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Bridge Road Alveley Bridgnorth WV15 6JN

Guide Price £135,000-£185,000

Built in the early 1970's and now to be sold for the very first time since new in order to close an Estate! - a larger style 3-bedroom detached bungalow in a pretty much original state, set within the lovely village of Alveley between Kidderminster and Bridgnorth and having a broad frontage together with a nice vista from the side gardens over to the character sandstone Church of St. Mary Virgin!. Immense further potential! EPC F
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Subtle style cues have been added to Mercedes core values of pace and elegance

The Mercedes-Benz E-Class is one of the safest and most advanced cars in its category

By John Griffiths

It has space and comfort in abundance combined with a a raft of the latest technology – plus a powerful but efficient engine.

Add to that sublime ride comfort and you can see why the latest Mercedes-Benz E-Class has driven off with so many awards, including the UK's Car of the Year, Company Car of the Year and Best Executive Car awards. It won praise from the Car of the Year jury as one of the safest and most advanced cars in its category.

The test car was the E350 estate, powered by a six cylinder, 3.0 litre turbo diesel engine, in sporty AMG Line trim with a list price of just over £48,000. It combines that essential Mercedes ambience of calm and luxury, but with the AMG styling adding subtle contemporary features such as carbon fibre and brushed aluminium to complement the aircraft-like instrument panel. It includes one of the largest, clearest info/control colour screens in the business.

It's particularly attractive at night, when the subtle blue mood lighting illuminates the driver and passenger positions without impacting on your night vision. This with the car's leather seats and cossetting ride, creates an impressive blend of with advanced safety technology and driver aids.

The attention to detail is equally impressive, like the large split screen reversing camera which gives wide, clear views even at night. Or the blind spot monitoring – a red triangle appears in the wing mirror as another vehicle enters the blind spot, but only if you operate the indicator at that

Inside the car is an ambience of calm and luxury

moment, signalling to pull out, do you get an audible alarm as well.

The parking brake automatically releases as soon as you press the starter button, while one finger on the column lever is enough to selection forward or reverse (or 'park' when you stop). There are up/down 'paddles, too, but the transmission is so smooth and responsive I only felt the need to use them to downchange for extra engine braking on steep inclines.

These are two of the 'little' things which add up to a lot. There are more complex driver aids too, such as speed limiter, adaptive cruise control and a system which recognises road signs and automatically limits your speed to the posted limit. Such things are important – if you want to avoid points and a big fine – in a car which almost conceals its powerful nature, so smooth is its progress.

Suspension settings are adjustable from comfort to dynamic, but for such a big car it feels stable through the twisty bits at any sensible speed and it simply glides along motorways.

And it is a big car: It seats five in comfort with up to 1,820 litres of cargo space thanks to split/fold rear seats. Head and elbow room in the rear are best in class, despite the lower roofline which gives the estate a sleeker, sportier appearance and has, no doubt, improved the car's aerodynamic efficiency, bringing benefits in noise levels and fuel efficiency.

The official fuel average is 48.7mpg, which I came almost surprisngly close to matching in real world driving. The CO2 rating is a competitive 151g/km.

The most popular E-Class Estates, though, are likely to be the E200 and E220d. The first costs under £40,000 in the same AMG Line trim and is a model of efficiency for the company car driver – 67.3mpg and 109g/km of CO2, The E220 costs £41,000 and boasts the same economy figures.

Coming soon will be the performance option, with the full AMG treatment – a 3.0 litre V6 bi-turbo turning out 401bhp.

All E-Class cars and estates are comprehensively equipped, and offer the space and technology which makes them a serious rival for upmarket SUVs.

The new versions bring subtle, contemporary styling to add to the core Mercedes values of pace and elegance.

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Stourbridge Chronicle Thursday, May 25, 2017

One of most complete cars on sale

By John Griffiths

There are at least two ways the Swedish owner of a new Volvo V90 Cross Country could feed himself; either take the car and go hunting in the forest for food – or order some groceries to be delivered to the car.

The shoot-your-dinner scenario, says Volvo, is precisely the role this newcomer was designed to fulfill in its native country, helping to penetrate deep into the forest by the car's raised ride height over its non-Cross Country siblings.

Also on board to up the car's off-roading cred is a setting that makes the four-wheel drive system adapt to the conditions under the tyres and a hill descent setting that keeps you slow and safe on steep slopes by applying the brakes for you.

About a quarter of buyers of Volvo's biggest V90 estate line are expected to take the Cross Country version, helped to stand out by its charcoal coloured plastic wheel arch extensions and side sill and door mouldings.

Also on the visual upgrade list are new gloss black radiator grille and (decorative only) silver skid plates front and rear and bits of that charcoal look on the bumpers. Oh, and there's 'Cross Country' embossed in the rear bumper to let you know why the car ahead is tackling the muddiest of lanes more comfortably than you.

On a more practical front, the 18ins alloy wheels are shod with softer compound tyres to ease the ride over the sort of boulder-strewn going this V90 might have to tackle. And the door mirrors are bigger, although more for the added butch-ness than a better rear view, apparently.

That extra 65mm of ground clearance was barely challenged on a soft-road trek through a Staffordshire wood on the V90 Cross Country's press drive but the hill descent control certainly was, and worked precisely as it should, to leave driver and occupants free to enjoy the scenery at a safe snail's pace.

Once you've shot your elk, or whatever, you might want some vegetables to go with the meaty stew. Swedish V90 owners are in luck if they specify the company's On Call system, that does all sort of clever things – including letting you order groceries for delivery to the car. Yes, really; those swedes and carrots are but a few phone clicks away.

Here in the UK you might find On Call handy for flashing the car's headlights in the vast underground car park ('ah, there it is!') or starting the engine on a frosty morning so the windscreen defrosts itself while you finish your bacon and eggs.

Sporty

Business users will enjoy the way this same system can remember 100 drives so you can more easily pop their details on your expenses at the end of the month.

Launched here at the same time as sporty looking R-Design versions of Volvo's big S90 saloon and V90 estate, the Cross Country comes only with the latter body style, meaning there is genuine leg stretching room in the back seat and a vast load area too, with 560 litres of space with rear seats in place or 1562 litres with them folded.

There are two engine choices for the Cross Country, both based on the same 2.0 litre diesel engine and producing 190 horsepower in the D4 version and a lusty 235hp as a D5. The more powerful version (£43,585) has PowerPulse, Volvo's clever way of eliminating the lag suffered by most turbocharged engines.

With PowerPulse a small electric motor keeps a high pressure air tank primed, to release puffs of compressed air to kick the turbo into life in a fraction of a second when brisk acceleration is summoned.

It works well enough to mourn its absence in the cheaper (£39,785) D4 Cross Country, which feels notably less spritely away from the line. The cars are near identical in CO2 emissions (D4 138g/km, D5 139k/km) and close on fuel consumption too (54.3mpg versus 53.3mpg) but there's a bigger distance between them on performance.

The D4 Cross Country hits 62mph in 8.8 seconds but it's beefier sibling cuts that sprint to 7.5 seconds, and you can quickly tell the difference. Both come with an automatic gearbox and both feel as though they would swallow a continent between breakfast and dinner.

Both also share a standard specification that leaves little for the options' list. Fitted to every Cross Country are a splendid sat nav system displayed on a huge screen presented in portrait format (i.e. upright) which makes more of the display than usual, two zone climate control, LED headlights with auto dipping, leather seats (heated in the front) and a powered tailgate.

Volvo is proud that the three safest cars ever tested by the European authority that rates these things are all Volvos and the Cross Country comes laden with gear to make life safer. Included are fully automatic emergency braking in town and the ability to recognise a large animal in the road (those elks again) and pilot assist that steers for you on roads with clear side markings. You need to keep your hands lightly on the wheel but it does the rest – even if the first few miles feel odd in the extreme.

Me? I would happily steer myself in one of the most complete cars you can buy.

VOLVO V90 D4 AWD CROSS COUNTRY, £39,785

There are new gloss black radiator grille, silver skid plates front and rear and bits of that charcoal look on the bumpers

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READERS ARE REMINDED to check with any Advertisers that their holiday costs are fully covered by a recognised bonding or insurance scheme.

mind, body & soul

massage

THE TANNING ROOMS
Full body massage 30 mins £22,
40 mins £27, 1 hour £37
SHOWER FACILITIES
Call: 01902 782960

3 Home & Services

collectables & memorabilia

COLLECTION OF china / Wedgwood, Royal Albert, Wade Beswick, plus much more. Please call for more details 07548 684497.

furniture

KINGSIZE BED FRAME, all wood slatted kingsize bed frame. £50 ono. 01902 843447.

MEMORY FOAM mattress, double, still wrapped, easycare, sell £130 ono. 07521 857432.

PINE BEDROOM furniture, set of 6 items, including full length dressing mirror, excellent condition, must be seen. £150 ono. 01384 240155.

household appliances

BOSCH BHE645 COOKER HOOD, as new, still boxed, cost £160, will accept £115 ono.
Telephone 01922 402915.

in your garden

LAWN TRACTOR
22hp, 42 inch cut with collector, totally new and unused.
Cost £4,000.
Will accept £1,895.
Can deliver.
Telephone 07710 169150.

WEBB 10" push mower with roller and grass box, £20.
07910 074802.

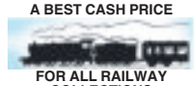
items for sale

ADVERTISERS ARE REMINDED
That the Business Advertisements (Disclosure) Order of 1977 requires that advertisements must clearly differentiate between Private and Trade.

HAVE YOU CHECKED your advertisement today? We would respectfully remind advertisers that it is their responsibility to inform the publishers of any mistakes or inaccuracies on the first day of publication.

items wanted

A BEST CASH PRICE



FOR ALL RAILWAY COLLECTIONS
Any gauge or age
Hornby/Bachmann/Bowmans/Roundhouse/Graham/Farsh/any live steam. Also Die Cast, Corgi, Dinky, Spot On.
01384 836219 / 07891 713547
thetrainmaster67@hotmail.com

ALL OLD COINS and notes wanted by collector.
01384 273396.

AUTO MEMORABILIA WANTED
SHELL, ESSO,
CASTROL ETC
ALSO
GARAGE CLEARANCES
Old Enamel Signs,
Petrol Cans,
Old Jugs,
Classic Car Parts,
Bikes and Motorbikes.
Anything old.
** TOP PRICES PAID **
01384 836219 / 07891 713547

READERS ARE ADVISED to carefully consider all of their options before agreeing to the sale of any of their items.

WANTED
J40 Pedal car, vintage moped, Sinclair C5, harp, Vintage vending/slot machines, Juke box, anything old, Old fire arms.
01384 484309 or
07930 949337.

WANTED TWO CAFE Style round seat Bentwood Chairs.
01384 254017.

Yesterdays Furniture
Best prices given for single items or houses cleared.
Scrap Gold Jewellery.
Call: 01384 482155
or 07802 475693

loans

READERS ARE REMINDED that they may require professional advice before entering into obligations.

t.v. / home entertainment

service

AERIAL AND TV SPECIALIST Any TV Repairs, Plasma, LED etc. CCTV cameras supplied & fitted. Any area. Free Estimates. 7 days. Digital aerials, Sky installation, Wall mounts / TV setups. 07850 330251.

specialists at your service

building services

DAVIES & SON BUILDERS
Over 35 years exp
All aspects of building work
Extensions, loft conversions, roofing, driveways & landscaping.
Discounts offered.
01902 579592 / 07837 994465

Brickwork Maintenance
Boundary Walls, Steps, Part Rebuilds, Brick Replacement, Repointing, Cleaning etc. CRB, C&G, Insured, Free Quotes.
Lee
0789 147 5718 or 0121 602 5313
lee@blackcountrybrick.co.uk

aerials

A AERIAL AND SKY SPECIALIST CCTV cameras fitted/tv wallmount, free quote/any area. 07850 330251

CHOOSE CLASSIFIED

"I am very pleased with the response I get from my Classified Advertising Contract"

Steve - AA Digital Aerials

For great business results call
01902 319 191
ClassifiedAds
Brought to you by Express & Star

AA DIGITAL AERIALS
SATELLITE & CCTV
AERIALS FITTED FROM £75
Work Guaranteed
01902 858191
01384 429166
01543 439095
01922 716029
07833 738857
VISA MasterCard CheckATrade.com

alarms/security

PREMIER ALARMS
Supplied and Fitted £195
Servicing and Repairs
12 Months Warranty
All areas covered
All quotes beaten!
Call: 0121 601 9791

carpet & upholstery cleaning

A BRILLCLEAN FOR YOUR CARPETS & SUITES
Special offers for May/June
OAP discounts.
Call Steve on
07496 922324

double glazing

A T S DOUBLE GLAZING
UPVC Doors & Windows
Very competitive prices, family run
FREE QUOTES & OAP DISCOUNTS
01922 442720 or 07783 229386

electrical services

STEVE JONES ELECTRICAL Rewires/sockets/fuse boards etc. All domestic and commercial work. 07786 858977/01902 846167.

external rendering / insulation

EXTERIOR RENDERING, full houses, patching, textured/smooth. 40yrs exp. Stuart 01902 324727.

PORTWAY FENCING
SPECIAL OFFER
10 Bays of quality fencing, concrete posts, gravel boards £695
Heavy duty panels supplied & fitted.
0121 531 5250 / 07866 137 656
Mon - Fri 8am - 4.30pm
Sat 8am - 12noon
83 Portway Rd, W'bury
DELIVERY AVAILABLE
www.portwayfencing.co.uk

CHOOSE CLASSIFIED

"I am extremely happy with the service I get from my Express & Star Classified Sales Representative and I would recommend them to anyone!"

Michael - Portway Fencing.

For great business results call
01902 319 191
ClassifiedAds
Brought to you by Express & Star

gardening services

A.COBRA
LICENSED WASTE CARRIERS
• Man and Digger Hire
• No Skip We Load
• Brick and Dirt Removal
01384 484309
07405 109317

GREENALY
Fencing Decking
Slabing Turfing
DBS Checked
07956 584523 • 0121 550 1712

GARDENS TIDIED from £5 per garden. 25 years experience. Call 01902 713106 / 07813 184086.

gas fitting

READERS ARE ADVISED
To check that anyone carrying out any Gas work is Gas Safe Registered.
It is an offence under the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998 to carry out gas work in the UK without being on the Gas Safe Register.

house clearances

ABSOLUTELY ANYTHING CLEARED
FULL OR PART, GARAGES AND SHEDS RUBBISH REMOVED WASTE LICENCE
01384 486456 / 07711661135

A ABSOLUTE BEST cash price paid for house clearances and bereavements. Also removals undertaken.
07852 172641 / 07710 360327

painters / decorators

LOVE 2 WALLPAPER
Reliable & Friendly, Professional
Female Painters & Decorators
Attention to detail, competitive prices.
For the Perfect Finish with minimum hassle.
Plastering & Coving Work Undertaken
01384 287577 or 07812 484194
www.love-2-wallpaper.co.uk

plastering

M & S PLASTERING & BUILDING Services. Home/Garden Improvements.Mark or Sara: 07741 770897

removals

KT HOUSE REMOVALS
12 years experience.
SINGLE ITEMS TO FULL LOADS.
LOCAL OR DISTANCE. FULLY INSURED.
Free Quotes - Call Ric on:
07771 727119

KINGSWINFORD REMOVALS AND HOUSE CLEARANCES
We move anything.
Professional service,
45 years' experience,
DFS approved and we take the stress away.
Please call:
07966 281957

CALL DEAN NOW: For all your Removal needs. 07429 453209/ 01902 830870 / 01384 940260.

CALL IAN. Man with a large van. No job too small, no distance too far. 07973 628534, 01902 891535.

MG ROOFING Flat roofs, tiling, roof repairs, fascias and gutters. Call 01902 238989 / 07580 465449.

rubbish removal

LETS TALK RUBBISH No Skips Needed.Load/Remove any Waste, House Clearance. 07969 628382

BIG JOHN MOVES RUBBISH! No Skips, we load, fast friendly service, 25 Lister Rd, Dudley DY2 8JR, Est 35 years, 01384 232359.

4 Pets & Animals

equestrian corner

ALL READERS are advised to check if Horses, Donkeys or Ponies have the required Passport information.

RUTLAND ELECTRIC Fence, ESB, 275 very good condition, perfect working order. Call for details 01691 648061.

guns & dogs

NOTICE TO ADVERTISERS
Advertisers must ensure that they meet all necessary legal requirements for owning and using guns.

pets corner

GREYHOUNDS MAKE WONDERFUL PETS
All neutered, innoculated and microchipped.
Call 01922 412212 or
www.rgtwolverhampton.co.uk
RGT Wolverhampton
@RGTWolves

KIND HOMES WANTED
Jack
Lab/cross, 2 years, old good with Children.
Molly
3 year old Terrier/Collie? Lovely girl but must be only dog.
* 8 year old Lhasa Apso, suit pensioners.
* 9 year old boy Pug Cross Cavalier, lovely little overweight chap.
Katie
7 year old Blue Merle Collie and
Megan
9 year old Collie both lovely girls.
Also other Collies
01588 676106.
www.dogsamaritans.org.uk

TODD AND CERI
two beautiful 4 month old Collies in need of very special homes with experienced dog owners, you would need to be home much of the time to aid there socialisation.
Todd and Ceri are two of five puppies born into the wild in a remote spot in mid Wales by a feral, but gentle, sweet dog. They love to play with other gentle dogs and toys, eat well, and are toilet trained.
Are you that special person who can help find them their happy ending.
Please contact 01588 676106
visit website
www.dogsamaritans.org.uk

6 Property

accommodation to let

A FURNISHED studio flat for single mature person, £365pcm, inc all bills. W-ton 07957 595840. No Dss.

NOTICE TO READERS
It is an offence under the Accommodation Agencies Act 1953, for an Agency to charge a fee simply for the registration of your requirements and/or supplying particulars of premises to let.

NOTICE TO READERS
Readers are advised to seek independent legal advice before entering into any financial commitments/contracts.

ROOM IN LUXURY house, close to W-ton Town Centre, all facilities, parking, £70pw. 07966 388773.

SMALL FLAT fully equipped, refurbished, suit mature male. £95pw + some services. 01384 821363.

THREE BEDROOM house, terrace, Pennfields, DG, CH, newly decorated, £600pcm. 07886 781724.

flats for sale

TWO BEDROOM GROUDFLOOR APARTMENT
In Penn Village.
Corner position.
£112,000 ono.
01902 331155.

overseas property

NOTICE TO READERS
Readers are advised to seek independent legal advice before entering into any financial commitments.

properties wanted

TRUSTED. RELIABLE.
WE BUY HOUSES.
Contact Mary on
07767 135 043
01384 686 050
mary@sotaproperties.com

7 Jobs

MONDAY
TUESDAY
WEDNESDAY
JOBSDAY

Every Thursday our special jobs section is packed with the week's latest vacancies.

Make sure you get your copy - it might be just what you've been waiting for.

jobs.expressandstar.com
REAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOU

employment wanted

EXPERIENCED Bricklayer requires employment. All types of brickwork. Contact 07341 021774.

nursing & carers

SENIOR CARE ASSISTANT nights, P/T Cook & P/T Care Assistant for new care home in Stourbridge. Norton Lodge 01384 376666.

part time - general

EXPERIENCED CURTAIN & LIGHT UPHOLSTERY SEWER 2/3 days per week. Tel 01384 70022

full time - general

The Stourport High School & VIth Form College
Minster Road, Stourport on Severn, DY13 8AX

Site Manager
Scale 6: £24 964 pa
37 hours/week, full year
We require an experienced Site Manager to be responsible for all aspects of the school premises. Knowledge of Health and Safety and project management are essential.

Learning Support Assistant
Scale TA2: £6857 pa
18 hours/week, term time only + training days
Wednesday - Friday 9:00am - 3:30pm
We have a vacancy for September 2017 for an experienced LSA to support students with specific learning difficulties.

Cleaner
Scale 1: £3922pa
12hrs/wk, 3.30pm start daily - term time only

Apprenticeship Opportunities:
1 year temporary contract to include work based training. Apprenticeships are not age restricted.
If you are interested in gaining a qualification, work experience and earning a salary all at the same time please contact us.

Administration Apprentice
£7233pa
37hrs/week, term time only
8am - 4pm, Monday - Friday
Excellent telephone and face to face communication skills and lots of initiative required, as well as the ability to juggle different demands and respond to requests with good humour. The successful candidate will be familiar with Microsoft Office and be keen to learn more. This post involves working with students therefore the successful applicant will be expected to have a mature outlook and maintain strict confidentiality at all times.

Catering Apprentice
32.5hrs/week, term time only
£5581pa
8am - 3pm, Monday - Friday
Formal qualifications are not required although an interest in food and customer service are essential. The successful candidate will work towards NVQ L2 in Food Production & Catering.

If you would like to apply for any of these positions please visit www.shs.worcs.sch.uk
or contact Mrs A James on 01299 872950
Closing date for all positions: Wednesday 7th June 2017

HARLOW TIMBER KIDDERMINSTER

Positions available

TIMBER YARD SUPERVISOR
Required to organise all yard operations and assist with transport
Plus

YARD STAFF
To pick customer orders and load and unload HGV vehicles within our busy timber yard. Forklift licence an advantage but not essential as training will be given.

These are permanent positions for the right candidates.

Closing date for applications: **Friday 2nd June 2017**

Please forward your CV to **t.blount@harlowbros.co.uk**

courses

BIRMINGHAM: 17-18 JULY & 30 NOV.-1 DEC.
WOLVERHAMPTON: 16-17 SEPT.
TELFORD: 20-21 MAY & 23-24 OCTOBER

Learn how to take blood
TRAIN AS A PHLEBOTOMIST
NATIONALLY RECOGNISED AND ACCREDITED
Introduction to Phlebotomy
TWO DAY COURSE - National UK Qualification
NO PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE REQUIRED
ocn Create4Learning
For more info or to book: www.geopace.com
HIGH DEMAND IN: Hospitals - GP Surgeries - Clinics - Private Sector - Community - MOD

8 Motoring

cars over £1500

HAVE YOU CHECKED your advertisement today? We would respectfully remind advertisers that it is their responsibility to inform the publishers of any mistakes or inaccuracies on the first day of publication.

CITREON BERLINGO
2002, 130,000 miles, white, long MoT, pas, diesel, Roma-home Campervan R20 model, gas grill, toilet, 3 way fridge.
£9,200.
01543 304154.

DAEWOO NUBIRA
1999, 43,000 miles, green, long MoT, one owner.
£450 ono.
07392 061005.

FORD FIESTA TITANIUM 95
1400, 5Dr hatchback, grey metallic, 2010, MoT January 2018, fsh, excellent condition, one previous keeper, extras, alloys, CD, mats, etc.
£4,495 ono.
07739 267589.

MERCEDES E280 ESTATE
55 reg, (Dec 2005), 123,000 miles, 2987cc, diesel, auto, silver metallic, finished to Avantgarde standard, fsh, MoT until Oct. Elegant, looks in good condition.
£4,000 ono.
01562 639227.

MINI COOPER, 53 £1995. Mini One, 55 £2695. Mini Cooper, 51, £1695. Severn Valley Leisure Stourbridge DY8 4HP. 01384 390183.

MINI ONE GRAPHITE
09 reg, 81k, 1400cc, petrol, metallic grey, one lady owner, fsh, usb, aux, Bluetooth, hill assist, stop/start, 6 speed, 10 months MoT.
£3,700 ono.
07878 239301.

NISSAN MICRA 1.4 TEKNA
3Dr, 2009, 60,000 miles, two owners, fsh, 10 months MoT, alloys, AC, auto climate control, radio CD, Bluetooth, Aux in, immaculate condition.
£2,695.
07486 646809.

SUPER BARGAIN

SEAT IBIZA 1.4SE
10 reg., good condition,
low mileage 43,000,
FSH, 12 months MoT.
£3,500 ono
07916 313148.

BARGAIN

SKODA FABIA 1.6 TDi
5dr, silver, 2011, immaculate condition, very economical, low mileage 49,500, long MoT, next due 14.03.18, FSH, last serviced 27.03.17, discs and pads changed at last service, well maintained, has history of being serviced by Skoda technicians, cam belt changed at 33,000 miles (have invoices), 2 keys, alarm, £20 per year road tax.
£4,150.
07817 073369.

IDEAL TOW CAR

SMART PASSION 4 2
2008, white, 32,600 miles, £30 per year road tax, with A frame plus breaking system for being towed.
£2,750 ovno.
07731 852980.

SUZUKI SWIFT SZ3
2013, 20,000 miles, red, abs, electric windows, air bag, electric mirrors, air con, fsh, alarm, MoT, central locking, pas, alloys, CD, excellent condition.
£5,200.
07712 669490.

VAUXHALL ASTRA 1.6 VVT EXCLUSIV
2010, 5 door, 47,968 miles, silver.
Good clean condition
Lady owner.
£3,700 ono
07840285111

VAUXHALL ASTRA
Eco 1700 diesel, 85,000 miles,
alarmed, £30 per year tax,
58 plate, alarm,
censors back and front,
all tyres perfect with locking nuts.
£3,700.
07923 191378.

LOW MILEAGE

VAUXHALL CORSA DESIGN TWINPORT
Triptronic, 17k miles, one lady owner, 05 reg, 12 months MoT, excellent condition.
£2,350.
Telephone 07895 346232.

EXCELLENT CONDITION

VAUXHALL ZAFIRA
09 plate, 59,000 miles, 4 new tyres, serviced, 6 months MoT, been checked by Evans Halshaw, with paperwork,
£3,300 ono.
07923 191378.

CONVERTIBLE

VAUXHALL TIGRA 1.4 EXCLUSIVE
09, 27,400 miles,
leather interior,
heated seats,
service history,
MoT, AC.
£2,500 o.n.o.
07973 349820
or
0121 530 9905.

LOOK

VW PASSAT 2.0TDi 140 BMT HIGHLINE ESTATE
2013, 89,000 miles,
in excellent condition.
VW service history,
new tyres,
MoT.
£8,450
01902 791976.

cars under £1500

IMMACULATE

BMW 318i
04 plate,
red, 97K,
manual, petrol,
MoT October 2017,
Very good condition.
£950
07931 809992.

CITROEN MULTISPACE
2007, diesel, 5 seater, excellent and clean, 2 large sliding doors, long MoT, 178,000 miles but serviced up to date.
Used for my wife's disability.
First to see will buy.
£1,500 ono
0121 505 7345.
07543 919304, Wednesbury.

BARGAIN

CITROEN PICASSO DIESEL 2.0
53 Reg.,
146,000 miles,
silver, manual,
well looked after,
no problems.
£400.
01562 632756.

FORD KA 1.3
2005, 75,000 Miles, Dark Blue, fsh, MoT until Sept '17. Ideal first car
£600 ono
07941 969117

LOOK

FORD KA
2007, MoT,
49,000 miles,
black, alloys,
EW, CL, PAS,
looks and drives great.
£995
07412 831994.

BARGAIN

PEUGEOT 207 1.4S
2007, 5-dr, hatchback,
silver, 81,000 miles,
MoT April 2018,
2 former keepers,
very clean inside and out.
£1,350.
07838 897643.

PEUGEOT 307
2003, 58,500 miles, blue, good condition, abs, electric windows, electric mirrors, fsh, long MoT.
£600.
07492 869001.

RENAULT MEGANE, 2004, 43,343 miles, red, electric windows, air bag, electric mirrors, air con, fsh, MoT, £950 ono. 07947 643454.

CONVERTIBLE

RENAULT MEGANE CONVERTIBLE 1.6
55 Reg,
excellent runner,
gold colour,
6 months MoT.
£1,200.
07478 478831.

1ST TO SEE WILL BUY

VAUXHALL CORSA 1.2
3 door, 52 reg.
Silver.
Only 65k.
12 months MoT.
Stunning condition.
Only £795.
Telephone 07840 175237.

BARGAIN

VAUXHALL CORSA 1.2 SXi
5Dr, 04 Reg.,
2 owners,
low miles,
long MOT, CD,
Central locking, PAS.
£975 ono
07400 994878.

VAUXHALL MERIVA 1.4
54 reg, black, MoT November, alloys, CD, runs and drives really well,
£450 ono.
07961 669911,

BARGAIN

VW PASSAT ESTATE DIESEL 1.9 TDi HIGHLANDER AUTO.
2005, 142K, fully loaded. Silver. Leather, alloys, etc....
£795.
Genuine callers only please.
Telephone 07850 330251

VW POLO
51 Plate, 5dr hatchback in silver, one lady owner from new, low mileage, full electrics, long MoT.
£525.
07599 220780

classic cars

WANTED, CLASSIC Car. Private cash buyer. Any condition, anything considered.
01630 652993 or 07773 462797.

motorbikes

1ST TO SEE WILL BUY

LAMBRETTA GOLDEN SUPER
1965, 125cc, as new, you won't find one better. Tool kit, spare rack cover, backrest cover.
£5,750.
07710 700187.

TRITON PRE UNIT 1965 all alloy Triton on log book many special parts, well sorted, £6,000. 07517 902349.

scrap vehicles

OUR ADVERTISERS are reminded that it is an offence under the Scrap Metal Dealers Act 2013 to buy scrap cars/metal for cash.

A BETTER PRICE
for scrap or damaged cars and commercials. Spares for sale.
NINE LOCKS VEHICLE DISMANTLERS LTD
Brierley Hill 01384 76566 or 70553. Evenings 75397. DY5 3JZ.

Need to sell your home fast?
We can help you make a fresh start
With solutions to suit ...
you can clear your debts and make a fresh start
Purchase Agreed Within **7 DAYS**
ALL CIRCUMSTANCES CONSIDERED
COMPLETE ON DATE TO SUIT
FREE VALUATION AND LEGALS
FREE FRIENDLY ADVICE
LOCAL COMPANY
MARION | PROPERTY SOLUTIONS
WHY NOT CALL US TODAY
for an informal, friendly and confidential chat?
01384 930 978
*Terms and Conditions apply
OUR LINES ARE OPEN 24/7

Home Cash Buyer
Sell today, sign today, complete when u wish
£££ RENT BACK OPTIONS £££
Houses / Land Required
Ring Paul 24/7 Local **07870 341 089**
Sandwell area: Call 0121 696 4154
Walsall & Cannock area: Call 01922 432049
Wolverhampton: Call 01902 489901
www.homecashbuyer.co.uk

CHOOSE CLASSIFIED
"I am really pleased with the response I get from my Classified Advertising!"
Paul Westwood - Home Cash Buyer
For great business results call
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ClassifiedAds
Brought to you by Express & Star

ClassifiedAds

vehicles wanted

alan reed cars
Used cars wanted for cash
Top prices paid. HP settled.
Buyer could call.
01562 711083 / 07831 245313

CROWN MOTORS guarantee best price for your unwanted cars/vans. 07903 549849, buyer will call.

WANTED
OLD CLASSIC CAR

Triumph / MG / Jaguar / Porsche etc anything interesting, as project / investment, condition not important.

Please telephone Ron

07424 399776.

spares & accessories

clutches / brakes / gearboxes

A CLUTCH CHANGE MOBILE
For Example:
Citroen C1, C2, C3
Hyundai 110, Toyota Yaris
Clios & Micras
Ring for quotes on others!
30 yrs experience
ALL AREAS COVERED
Call Bob
01384 251328
07972 169554
anytime

9 Local Information

public & legal notices

LEGAL / PUBLIC NOTICES
For convenience you may fax any advertising requirements to
Marie Hogg on 01902 713146
or email marie.hogg@expressandstar.co.uk
(remember to include a name/contact number for confirmation of receipt)

10 Personals

personal

ATTRACTIVE lonely Female seeking broadminded males within a 20 mile radius. 01902 489 181.

PAT, KITTEN CARD

You wrote but no telephone number, try again.

Box Number P20811 ,
Express and Star,
Queen Street,
Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES.

SINGLE MALE

Slim, NS, active male,
young 70 from Wombourne.

WLTM a younger, slim, NS adventurous lady, who enjoys travel, country walks and pubs and visiting interesting places.

Box Number P20809,
Express and Star,
Queen Street,
Wolverhampton,
WV1 1ES.

sports clubs

PENN COLTS FC
5 / 7 A-SIDE TOURNAMENT
U7'S minor - 8 / 10 / 12 / and 14's
Saturday, July 1.
U7'S / 9 / 11 / 13 / 15.
Sunday, July 2.
For all application forms visit
www.penncolts.co.uk
or call 07748 677682.

Local Specialists

Blinds & Curtains

Blinds4Less
Choose From a fantastic range!
-Pleated -Venetians
-Romans -Curtains
-Verticals -Awnings
-Rollers -Shutters
New range of Chainless Verticals and Night and Day Rollers
Give us a try before you buy!
Contact us on
01384 886162
and 07989 588728
Blinds4lessdirect.com

Builders

C ETHERIDGE
BUILDING SERVICES
- Extensions
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- Roofing
- Landscaping
- Block paving
- General property maintenance.

Over 35yrs experience
For a **FREE** quote call Chris
01384 635627
07989 738732

Double Glazing

MISTY UNITS REPLACED
Buy Direct from the manufacturer. Est. 1999
Reduce heat loss by up to 75%
Also upgrade your existing double glazed units to Pilkington Energikare, it will help to reduce the amount of heat lost through your windows by up to 75%, lock, handles, hinges.
WITH A 10 YEAR GUARANTEE AND FITTING SERVICE AVAILABLE
WE HAVE A NEW TELEPHONE NUMBER
01384 918383
Delph Glazed Units
Unit 32 Delph Rd Ind Est (by the tank), Brierley Hill DY5 2UA
Visit our new website
www.delphglazedunits.co.uk
Mobile: 07887 520599

Misted Sealed Units?
Black Country Glazing
Contact US for a FREE quote!
Manufacturers & Installers of windows, doors & conservatories
'A' Rated Windows as Standard
10 YEAR GUARANTEE
Please see our customer reviews on either Homepro or Which
"Energy efficient windows that won't cost the earth"
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Est 1987
01384 566100
www.blackcountryglazing.com
certass FENSA

Decorating

A.S.
Painter & Decorator
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U-13s high jump winner Jolyon Davis, of Wolverhampton & Bilston AC

High jump judges get out the measuring tape

Competitors warm up before the start of the championships

Steve Hollis, Tamworth, competes in the men's javelin

Records tumble as championship returns to city

Birchfield Harriers' Archie England in the u-13s javelin

Long jumper Isabelle Kelly, aged 15, for Cannock & Stafford

SPORTING FEATURE

By Clare Butler

"To welcome it back in our 50th year was very special. It was wonderful. There were many great performances."

RECORDS were shattered as more than 300 athletes descended on Wolverhampton for the Staffordshire County Track and Field Championships.

For the first time in almost 30 years, Aldersley Stadium played host to an event which sees the region's best go head-to-head.

Host club Wolverhampton & Bilston watched three of its junior stars set new records en route to victory – in the year the club celebrates its 50th birthday. Jolyon Davies, in the under-13 high jump, Molly Walsh, in the junior women's hammer (4kg) and Phoebe Baggott in the under-15 girls hammer (3kg) all went higher and further than any athletes in those category before.

Club president Mary Harding said: "It has not been held here for many years and usually would be held at Stoke or Cannock, so to welcome it back in our 50th year was very special.

"It was wonderful to be able to bring it back. There were many great performances."

Davies, who also took victory in the u-13 shot competition, achieved a height of 1.51m in the high jump, which set a new record in the category.

Walsh meanwhile set a new record in junior women's hammer with a distance of 53.15m, while Baggott threw 56.43m in the u-15s girls' hammer.

A busy day of action featured athletes from clubs including Tipton Harriers, Stone Master Marathoners, Cannock & Stafford and Dudley & Stourbridge Harriers.

Tipton enjoyed early success thanks to Alexia Bennett-Cordy, who won the u-15 75m hurdles in 11.7 seconds.

Cannock & Stafford's Amy Pye showed her versatility with victory in both the u-17 80m hurdles and 300m, before club-mates Chloe Wilde and Natalie Ainge won the women's junior and senior 400m races respectively, Wilde with a new championship record time of 64.8 seconds.

Travis Christie gave the home club something to celebrate, coming home ahead of the field in the men's senior 400m, while Cannock's strong afternoon continued with a one-two in the men's u-17 800m final as Joshua Ward led home team-mate Bill Chesters.

Wolverhampton & Bilston took the top three positions in the u-15 girls 800m with Aliya Westwood finishing in front of Lucy Semple and Jessica Moore and then proceeded to dominate the 1500m races at u-15 level, with Alfie Oliver winning the men's and Ella Semple the girls.

The sprints saw Cannock & Stafford's Chloe Lindop lead home the field in the junior women's 100m, while Derrion Thompson won the senior race – she also won the senior 200m event.

Wolverhampton & Bilston's Alexander James Nwenwo ran 11.4 seconds to win the men's senior 100m. Clubmate Donovan James took the 200m race in 23.1 seconds.

A distance of 5.24m was enough for Wolverhampton & Bilston's Sophie Worrall to win the women's senior long jump.

Cannock & Stafford athletes impressed in the javelin, with Rebecca Scott taking victory in the senior event and Bethan Rees the junior. Emma Douras of Dudley & Stourbridge won the senior high jump competition.

Alexia Bennett-Cordy, for Tipton, in the 80m hurdles

Rutter roars home to show true quality

BRIERLY Hill race Michael Rutter rolled back the years, demonstrating why he remains one of the world's greatest road racers by securing his 14th North West 200 win.

The victory moved Rutter, at the age of 45, to third on the all-time winners list at the famous North Irish triangular circuit, sandwiched between late, greats Joey Dunlop and his brother Robert.

He started the week in superb form, taking pole for the two Superbike races on Saturday – lapping the course at 122.345mph, his fastest ever around the 8.9-mile circuit – and was second on the grid for the opening Superstock and Supertwin races on the Thursday.

The Bathams/SMT Racing BMW rider would also eventually go on to secure two stunning second-place finishes and a third, which, added to his win, meant he had been on the podium in four out of his six races.

The results meant Rutter moved up to an astonishing 31 podiums, which has only been bettered by Alastair Seeley.

Rutter now heads to Donington Park for round four of the National Superstock 1000 Championship, this weekend, May 27-28, before making the trip across the Irish Sea for the Isle of Man TT races.

Service in memory of rugby club stalwart

A SERVICE of thanksgiving will be held next week for Stourbridge rugby stalwart John Jeavons-Fellows following his death at the age of 78.

Described as a 'leading light' in the Lions for the past 60 years, the popular official passed away peacefully in his sleep last Tuesday.

A former pupil of King Edward Grammar School, Jeavons-Fellows began playing for Stour's first team aged 18. At 19 he organised the club's first ever tour and was later appointed captain. After hanging up his boots, Jeavons-Fellows continued to work to improve the club.

He masterminded various stages of Stourbridge's development and helped provide the clubhouse that is currently in place at Bridgnorth Road. He was also keen for Stour to have a profile in the national game with his work ensuring Stourbridge became the training venue for England's Grand Slam winning team of 1980.

He also enjoyed roles as a rugby administrator with Worcestershire & Herefordshire and The North Midlands RFU. In 1997 he was also part of the British Lions management team for their tour to South Africa.

The service takes place at St Mary's. Old Swinford, at 2pm on June 2, and afterwards at Stourbridge Rugby Club.

Aces rally round for hospice fundraiser

CYCLE speedway side Wednesfield Aces are on track for a night of fun and fundraising later this year.

The charity night in aid of Compton Hospice will see 16 riders competing in five heats each in a handicap formula. The big night will be under the floodlights on Friday, September 15 at the club's Ashmore Park venue, hosted by Signal 107DJ Scott Lyons who will call the riders home.

Each participant is expected to raise £50 and there will be a collection bucket and a raffle on the evening. Everyone taking part will take home an award and the overall winner will take home the Steph Clarke Challenge Shield.

Mrs Clarke died in November 2016 at the same time as Wednesfield was enjoying its new Christmas lights – she had been the driving force behind its fundraising. She had been involved in several community projects including the Aces, Hands on Wednesfield and volunteered at the Ashmore Community Centre as well as running photography classes and working full-time as a social media trainer. Steph and her husband James founded the community website wv11.co.uk

Sport

Region's young athletes leap into record books

Page 39

Still top of league after fixture tied

Stourbridge CC 1st XI (136-7) tied with Lichfield (138 a/o) D/L method

STOURBRIDGE remain top of the Birmingham League Division Three following an exciting tie against Lichfield.

The start was delayed start due to heavy rain and, after Stour skipper Josh Banks lost the toss, the hosts were asked to field.

The decision backfired on Lichfield as they were five down for 37 in the 12th over, all five wickets taken by 16-year-old Zain Ul Hassan in a seven over spell.

More rain prevented Banks' team making further inroads, this time just over two hours were lost, reducing the match to 39 overs per side from 50.

After the match resumed number seven Joe Seagre took charge hitting 55 not out off 61 balls that included two sixes. The introduction of Jitesh Jivan-Patel in the 27th over finished off Lichfield's innings. His six over spell produced 3-33. Stour's fielders held on to eight catches and a direct hit run out to put them in the driving seat.

The reply started badly as Harshad Patel was caught and bowled in the second over without scoring. Ul Hassan and opener Alex Bingham took the score to 72. After their departures, Lichfield captured Richard Bradley, Matt Bradley and Jade Richter and Stour needed 30 runs off 30 balls with six wickets down.

Banks and Jivan-Patel took sensible singles and the latter hit two fours to ease the pressure. The target was reduced to single figures off the final over, but Jivan-Patel tried another boundary and was caught on the boundary.

Banks and Dominic O'Reilly number nine scrambled two off the final delivery to reach the 136 target set by Duckworth and Lewis (D/L).

Stour visit Stratford-Upon-Avon on Saturday, noon start.

Triathletes test their strength at home and abroad

FOUR Black Country triathletes took on the legendary Ironman Lanzarote which comprised a 2.4-mile sea swim, 112-mile bike and a 26.2-mile run. All finished well within the 18-hour cut off time.

In Sankt Wendel, Germany on Sunday, Paul Rogers and Robert Kennard represented Great Britain in the Powerman European Middle Distance Duathlon Championships in the 50-54 age group, with a 10km run, 60km bike then another 10km run. Rogers finished third in age group, collecting a bronze medal.

In Nottingham, all BCT athletes finished in fantastic times in the Outlaw Half, a 1,900m open water swim, 56-mile bike and a 13.1-mile run.

Mark Anslow took on the Slateman Triathlon in Swowdonia, a 1,000m lake swim, a 51km bike ride and an 11km off road trail run. Reece Ashfield was first in age group and seventh overall in the Sprint Triathlon in Southport.

Adults and juniors raced in the Phoenix Sprint Tri at Ragley Hall, Warwickshire, and the Telford Tinman Sprint Tri, Super Sprint Tri and Wrekin Aquathlon at Wrekin College.

Legend Hancock races in to meet fans

Greg Hancock

GREG Hancock, one of Cradley Heath's all-time greats, will be back in the West Midlands to meet fans in July.

The reigning world champion, aged 46, started his professional career at the old Dudley Wood Stadium in 1989 but no longer races in the UK and splits his time between Sweden and California.

But on Thursday July 20 he will be on stage at the Cleveland Arms sports pub in Wolverhampton when fans will hear stories from his career, thoughts on this season and plans for the future.

Tickets are £12 standard or £30 VIP, to include early entry, buffet, priority seating and a picture with Hancock signed on the night. Doors open at 7pm for an 8pm start – but VIP doors open at 6pm.

Tickets are available from clevelandarms.com via paypal, on 01902 451021 or the Cradley club shop on racenights.

Meanwhile, current Cradley hero Danny Ayres is facing up to another Bank Holiday dash. Ayres takes his place in the Heathens side for their attractive Monday night National League battle with Belle Vue at Wolverhampton. But in the afternoon he's riding for Premiership Leicester against Rye House.

Heathens follow Wolverhampton's fixture with Poole, which gets under way at 6pm. Normal Wolverhampton admission prices apply – Cradley season ticket holders can gain entry for £5 and there will be a turnstile open for the Heathens meeting only from 7.15 approximately.

Heathens beat Buxton on Sunday to go top of the league. They head to Lakeside on Sunday (3pm).

Speedway

NON-LEAGUE SHAKE-UP BID

SEVERAL Midlands football clubs are set to switch divisions as part of the biggest shake-up of non-league football for more than a decade.

The changes, set to be rubber-stamped by the FA, would see clubs including Stourbridge, Halesowen Town, Rushall Olympic and Hednesford Town – who all currently play in the Evo-Stik Northern League at step three of the non-league pyramid – incorporated into a new 'Midland Division' from the start of 2018/19.

Chasetown, who play a division below in the Evo-Stik Division One South, would also be affected, along with a host of clubs who currently ply their trade in the step five Midland Premier League, with more promotion places expected to be on offer next term in order to prepare for the most drastic realignment of the non-league game since the introduction of Conference North and South in 2004.

Feeder

The current structure sees three divisions operate at step three – the Northern League, Southern League and London-based Isthmian League – each with two feeder divisions at the step below.

Under the changes, a fourth division will now be introduced at step three. Though it will operate under the jurisdiction of the Southern League, it is expected to incorporate clubs in the 'Greater Midlands' area.

A further division will also be added at step four, under the control of Isthmian League with the proposals aimed at cutting travelling costs and times for fans, players and officials and encourage more step five clubs to climb the pyramid.

Midlands clubs currently constitute the Northern League's most southern outposts and are almost certain to switch en masse to the new division. The proposals will also see the number of clubs in step three divisions cut from 24 to 22 teams, while the seven divisions in step four will carry 20 teams each once the changes have been introduced.

By far the biggest impact will see a drastic effect in the number of clubs being promoted or relegated next season to prepare for the revised structure.

Only one team will drop from each of the existing step three divisions, while a total of 19 clubs will be promoted from step four.

The increased number of promotions will also extend to step five, with a total of 26 promotion places set to be on offer across several divisions, including the Midland Premier League, which currently houses the likes of Sporting Khalsa, Lye Town and AFC Wulfrunians, among others.

The changes, which have been approved by each league, will now officially be given the green light at the FA's AGM at Wembley today (Thursday), with the finer detail of how the new division's will be incorporated set to be thrashed out later in the summer.

Club duo on road to Wimbledon

From left, Charlie Nicholls, Harvey Parsons, Michael Scriven and Bobby Gale

TWO Wollaston Tennis Club youngsters are on the road to Wimbledon after serving up success in Britain's biggest junior competition.

Harvey Parsons beat Michael Scriven in the club stage of the HSBC Road To Wimbledon event, aimed at players aged 14 and under.

Both will progress to the Staffordshire county finals in July. All county winners progresses to the national finals at Wimbledon.

The afternoon saw some excellent tennis and very closely fought matches over a four-hour period, with many matches decided on a third set championship tie-break.

Charlie Nicholls won the 3rd/4th play-off match against Bobby Gale.

Wollaston Junior chairman Dave Scriven, who organised the club stage competition, said: "This is the first time Wollaston have entered this national competition. Our juniors were keen to compete and the club stage was both competitive and enjoyable."

Next month Wollaston Juniors will be participating in another LTA event. They will be sending doubles teams to a Team Challenge event between several local clubs.

Baggies and Blues to face Glassboys

BIRMINGHAM and West Bromwich Albion will provide opposition for Stourbridge FC during the close-season.

The Glassboys' warm-up programme has been completed, with a home games against Blues under-23s squad – a friendly agreed as part of the Dan Scarr transfer deal – taking place on July 18 at 7.30pm.

Southern League Premier Division Redditch United will visit Amblecote on July 25. The opening game will be on July 8 against the Baggies under-23 squad at the Albion training ground.

Games will follow at Stourport Swifts, Alvechurch and Sporting Khalsa, who play at Willenhall Town's former Noose Lane home. The final pre-season match on August 5 sees an intriguing meeting with Hereford FC at Edgar Street.

The Bulls have risen to the Southern League Premier Division on the back of two consecutive promotions since they were formed out of the ashes of Hereford United.

The Glassboys have opted not to enter the 2017/18 Worcestershire Senior Cup, which will again be held in pre-season.

The full pre-season programme is as follows: Saturday July 8, noon, West Bromwich Albion u-23 Development squad (a) – (WBA training ground); Tuesday July 18, 7.30pm, Birmingham City (h); Saturday July 22, 3pm, Stourport Swifts (a); Tuesday, July 25. 7.45pm, Redditch United (h); Saturday, July 29, 3pm, Alvechurch (a); Tuesday, August 1, 7.45pm, Sporting Khalsa (a), Saturday August 5, 3pm, Hereford (a).

Midfielder Brad Birch has left the Glassboys to sign for his hometown club Worcester City but there is good news on teenage striker Brandon Hague, who has been given the all-clear by his specialist to resume playing after missing the second half of last season with an infection that was affecting his balance.

Chilton treble fires Woodside to glory

WOODSIDE hot-shot Lee Chilton was the headline act in the Dudley Guest Hospital Charity Cup final.

Chilton bagged a hat-trick and the man of the match award as Woodside eased to a 4-0 success against Wordsley AFC Reserves at Dudley Sports FC.

Carl Whyte started the victory charge when he made it 1-0 with Chilton adding a second before half-time.

Chilton then increased his side's lead from the penalty spot after Anthony Nicholls had been upended.

And he had the final say when he rounded off a fine team move to complete his treble.

★★★

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